Music for Orchestra

Dafydd Bullock



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Volume 3

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Introduction

The works gathered here occupy a rather different territory from the symphonies and symphonic poems. They are, in many respects, the pieces that exist around the edges of the larger orchestral output: occasional works, celebrations, tributes, elegies, arrangements, musical jokes, ceremonial pieces and works prompted by particular people or circumstances. Yet to describe them merely as miscellaneous would be misleading. Taken together, they reveal something important about the way Bullock has always approached composition: music can arise from an occasion without being confined by it, and a work written for a particular person or event can acquire a life beyond its original purpose.

There is considerable variety here. *Abschieds-Walzer*, with its affectionate apologies to Johann Strauss and Gustav Mahler, enters into a deliberately playful dialogue with two very different traditions of the waltz. *Festmusik*, written for the Freimaurerloge „Zum Verein der Menschenfreunde“ in Trier, is explicitly ceremonial, moving from *Einzug* through *Interlude* to *Licht*, while *Festmusik 2* explores the idea of celebration through five contrasting instrumental worlds, from brass and timpani to an extensive percussion ensemble and finally the full orchestra. The *Birthday Serenade for the Grand Duke of Luxembourg* similarly begins with the requirements of public celebration, but gradually reveals a more intimate musical dimension.

Elsewhere, the circumstances are quieter. *Elegy, for those who never met …* turns towards absence and the contemplation of an unfulfilled connection. *Chanson Triste* takes the idea of song and removes the voice, allowing the orchestra itself to become the singer. *Der Doktor - Faust in Wien* is something quite different again: a setting of Goethe in which theatricality, humour and genuine philosophical unease coexist. The small wedding piece for India belongs to the tradition of music written for a particular human occasion, while *Evelyn's Evergreens* brings the collection ultimately into the most personal sphere of all: a grandfather arranging the songs that his granddaughter loved at a particular moment in her childhood.

What links these works is therefore not a common musical language so much as a common human impulse. People, places, ceremonies, friendships, memories and occasions repeatedly become the starting point for composition. The resulting music is sometimes grand and public, sometimes intimate and private, sometimes deliberately humorous, but even the most occasional pieces are treated as opportunities for genuine musical exploration.

The orchestration likewise varies according to the character of each work. Large forces are sometimes employed for ceremonial breadth and colour, while reduced ensembles allow individual instrumental voices to emerge with greater intimacy. Strings, winds, brass, percussion, harp and guitar are not simply resources to be deployed according to convention; their particular sonorities become part of the meaning of each piece. In *Festmusik 2*, the very process of adding and subtracting instrumental forces becomes a structural principle. In *Evelyn's Evergreens*, the smaller ensemble permits a quite different kind of musical intimacy.

These pieces also demonstrate that the boundary between “occasional” and “serious” music is an artificial one. A composition may have been prompted by a birthday, a wedding, a farewell, a friendship or a family moment and nevertheless contain the same concerns with rhythm, colour, texture, memory and musical continuity that inform larger works. Indeed, the particular circumstances can sometimes make the music more, rather than less, revealing.

This collection therefore represents not a secondary or peripheral part of the catalogue, but another perspective upon it. The works are smaller windows through which much of the same musical personality can be seen: a fascination with tradition without a desire simply to reproduce it, an affection for ceremony coupled with a readiness to undermine its solemnity, and, above all, a continuing belief that music can transform an individual circumstance into something capable of being shared.

Irish Mist Op. 27a

Programme Note

Irish Mist, Opus 27a, is an arrangement of an early piano piece, whose title immediately establishes an atmosphere rather than a narrative. The music evokes Ireland through mood and gesture: a landscape seen through shifting light and haze, where melody seems to emerge from the mist and then disappear into it again. The score is intimate in conception, despite its orchestral forces, and its expressive world is created principally through lyrical melody, gentle rhythmic lilt and changing instrumental colour.

The work begins with the flute alone, marked mp espressivo and accompanied by the instruction *"with a slow lilt ..."*. Its opening melody has an unmistakably song-like quality. The lilting rhythmic profile gives the music movement without destroying its stillness, while the absence of accompaniment at first allows the flute to sound almost like a solitary voice heard across a distant landscape. The harp subsequently enters to enrich the texture, and the solo violin and solo violoncello become increasingly important as the music unfolds.

The central character of the work lies in the way this simple melodic world is gradually enlarged. The solo violin frequently carries the principal lyrical material, while the cello provides a darker and more grounded counterpart. Around them the string orchestra creates a continuously changing harmonic environment. The music does not depend upon dramatic contrasts so much as upon the gradual accumulation and release of colour. Passages of greater animation emerge naturally from the opening lilt before subsiding again into more reflective material.

There is an appealing ambiguity in the harmonic language. The melodies remain direct and singable, but their surroundings are continually changing, so that the listener is never quite certain where the music will settle. This contributes strongly to the impression suggested by the title. Like mist itself, the musical landscape is recognisable but never entirely fixed.

As the work progresses, the orchestral texture becomes fuller and more active. Rhythmic figures are exchanged between the soloists and accompanying strings, and the music acquires a stronger sense of forward movement. Yet the essential lyricism remains. Even when the orchestra reaches its more emphatic passages, the melodic impulse is never overwhelmed by orchestral weight.

The later pages return increasingly to sustained sonorities and spacious melodic writing. The solo violin again comes to the foreground above long-held string harmonies, while the cello and lower strings provide depth beneath it. The final pages are particularly atmospheric: the music seems gradually to withdraw from the listener rather than conclude with a decisive gesture. The last sounds are sustained, leaving the impression of a landscape disappearing once more into mist. The score is dated Canach, 23 January 2010.

Discussion

Irish Mist belongs to a very different period and expressive world from the large orchestral works of Bullock's later catalogue, and its relative simplicity is one of its attractions. Here the orchestra is not being asked to construct a vast architectural argument. Instead, it becomes a medium for atmosphere, melody and memory. The title is therefore fundamental to the listener's experience, not because the music attempts literal pictorial description, but because it provides a frame through which the changing musical colours can be heard.

The opening is particularly revealing. The instruction *with a slow lilt* establishes the rhythmic identity of the piece before any elaborate orchestral argument has developed. The flute's melody is both modest and expressive, with the natural rise and fall of a folk-like song. There is something deliberately unforced about it. The music seems to begin in the middle of a landscape rather than announcing itself with a formal orchestral introduction.

This connection with song is maintained throughout the work. Even when the melodic material is transferred to the solo violin, it retains the character of something sung rather than something virtuoso. The violin is not treated as a concerto soloist displaying technical prowess; it functions instead as a human voice within the orchestra. The solo cello provides a complementary voice, deeper and more inward, and the relationship between the two solo instruments becomes one of the work's most expressive features.

The presence of the harp is equally important. It does not dominate the texture but contributes an almost visual element to the orchestral writing, helping to dissolve the boundaries between melody and accompaniment. The harp's sonorities, together with the sustained strings, allow the music to move between clearly defined melodic lines and more diffuse harmonic spaces. This is where the title *Irish Mist* becomes particularly apt: the musical landscape is created as much by what remains indistinct as by what is clearly articulated.

The harmonic writing is also characteristic of the work's atmospheric purpose. Bullock does not abandon tonal orientation, but he allows harmonic colour to complicate the straightforwardness of the melodies. The result is a productive tension between familiarity and uncertainty. The melodic gestures can sound almost traditional in their directness, while the harmonic surroundings prevent them from settling too comfortably into conventional expectations.

There is a broader sense of movement beneath the apparent stillness. The recurring lilting figures give the music a quiet physical motion, and later passages become increasingly rhythmically active. Around the middle of the work, the accompanying strings develop more persistent rhythmic patterns while the upper voices continue to sing above them. The effect is not of a conventional dramatic development but of a landscape gradually revealing more of itself.

The work's formal trajectory is consequently best understood as a process of emergence and withdrawal. An initially solitary voice becomes a dialogue; the dialogue becomes an orchestral texture; the texture acquires movement and intensity; and eventually the accumulated sound recedes into sustained sonorities. This is a simple but convincing form, and it corresponds closely to the psychological image suggested by the title.

The later music is especially effective. The accumulated energy is gradually absorbed back into lyricism. The solo violin remains an important presence while the surrounding strings sustain long harmonic fields. On the final page, the music is reduced to broad sustained lines and a final quiet disappearance.

What makes *Irish Mist* significant within the wider catalogue is therefore not its scale but its concentration. It demonstrates an early ability to take a relatively small expressive idea and sustain it through orchestral colour without overstatement. The work's emotional world is built from melody, lilt, harmonic ambiguity and the contrast between individual voices and collective sonority.

There is also something revealing in the work's treatment of landscape. Ireland is not represented through a collection of musical clichés. There is no attempt to construct an obviously "Irish" orchestral idiom. Instead, Bullock finds a more personal response: the slow lilt, the singing line, the softened harmonic edges and the gradual disappearance of sound. The landscape is therefore as much psychological as geographical.

Seen retrospectively, *Irish Mist* can be regarded as an early example of an aspect of Bullock's music that would remain important throughout his later work: the desire to transform a place, memory or human experience into an emotional landscape rather than a literal musical picture. The orchestra becomes a means of looking and listening. In *Irish Mist,* what it sees is indistinct, shifting and elusive - but what it hears is remarkably clear: a long, lyrical song carried gently through the mist.

Variation Op. 102

Programme Note

Variation is a short work based on “Mae Hen Wlad Fy Nhadau”, the Welsh national anthem. Written for an amateur orchestra, it takes a melody which is deeply familiar to Welsh listeners and treats it not as an occasion for elaborate virtuosity, but as the starting point for a modest sequence of transformations.

The character of the work is established immediately by the presentation of the anthem's melody in a clear and spacious texture. The music moves between contrasting rhythmic and harmonic treatments, allowing the familiar tune to appear in different guises while remaining recognisable throughout. Changes of metre, dynamic level and texture provide the principal means of variation, with passages of greater intensity balanced by quieter and more reflective episodes.

There is a particular pleasure in hearing such a well-loved melody subjected to variation without losing its identity. The anthem carries with it associations of Wales, memory, community and collective singing, and the work respects that familiarity. Rather than attempting to disguise the original tune beneath complex elaboration, Bullock allows it to remain present and recognisable while changing its surroundings.

The later stages of the piece become increasingly expansive, with the melody given broader harmonic treatment before the music gradually relaxes. The conclusion is marked by a *molto ritardando* and a final *diminuendo,* bringing the work to a quiet and deliberate close rather than ending with a large ceremonial flourish. The score is dated Luxembourg, Autumn 1995.

Discussion

Variation is a small work, but its choice of material gives it a significance beyond its modest dimensions. *"Mae Hen Wlad Fy Nhadau"* is not merely a melody: it is one of the strongest musical embodiments of Welsh identity. To use it as the basis for a composition is therefore to engage with something already carrying an enormous weight of collective memory. Bullock's response is to avoid competing with that weight. Instead, he treats the anthem with affection and allows its essential character to remain visible throughout the piece.

This is particularly appropriate given the circumstances for which the work was written. An amateur orchestra does not require music designed principally to demonstrate technical sophistication. The challenge is rather to create something musically satisfying, playable and communicative. Variation meets that challenge by finding interest in the transformation of familiar material itself. The players and listeners are given the pleasure of recognition, while the composer provides sufficient alteration of rhythm, harmony, texture and dynamics to make the musical journey worthwhile.

The work begins from a remarkably direct conception. The anthem is allowed to establish itself before the variations begin to complicate its presentation. The notation reveals a flexible rhythmic structure, moving between three- and four-beat groupings, while dynamic markings provide a continuously changing expressive contour.

What emerges is less a set of formally numbered variations than a continuous transformation. One idea leads naturally to another, and the listener is encouraged to follow the changing character of the melody rather than to identify a succession of discrete compositional procedures. This gives the work a sense of unity which is important in such a short piece. The anthem remains the thread running through the entire composition.

There is also an interesting balance between public and private feeling. *"Mae Hen Wlad Fy Nhadau"* is perhaps at its most powerful when sung collectively, whether at a rugby match, a national ceremony or a gathering of Welsh people abroad. Bullock's *Variation,* however, repeatedly draws the melody into quieter and more intimate surroundings. The familiar tune can therefore be heard not only as a declaration of national identity but also as an object of personal memory.

That distinction is especially poignant given the date of the composition, Autumn 1995. By this stage Bullock had already established a strong connection with Welsh musical and cultural life, and the work can be heard as part of that continuing relationship. Yet it does not attempt to make a grand statement about Wales. Its modesty is part of its charm.

The ending confirms this approach. After the various transformations, the music slows markedly and becomes much softer. The anthem is thus not sent out in a final blaze of patriotic triumph; instead, it is allowed to settle into silence. The effect is almost one of remembering the tune after the music has stopped.

Variation represents an especially personal and practical strand of Bullock's orchestral writing. It is not a symphonic argument, nor a tone poem, nor an attempt to reinterpret Welsh identity on a monumental scale. It is a composer taking one of the melodies most deeply embedded in his own cultural inheritance and finding a concise way of looking at it anew. Its achievement lies precisely in that combination of familiarity and transformation: the old melody remains unmistakably itself, while the music around it allows us to hear it afresh.

Abschieds-Walzer Op. 172

Programme Note

Abschieds-Walzer, Opus 172, is a large-scale orchestral waltz dedicated to Harald Feix. The title, literally a "Farewell Waltz", places the work within one of the most recognisable traditions of Central European musical culture, while the composer's subtitle - "with apologies to Johann Strauss and Gustav Mahler" - makes clear from the outset that the work is consciously engaging with that tradition with affection, humour and a certain mischievousness.

The scoring is substantial, calling for flute, oboe, clarinet, bassoon, horns, trumpets, trombone, tuba, timpani, side drum, glockenspiel, harp and strings. The scale of the orchestra allows Bullock to move freely between the elegance of the traditional waltz and much more expansive orchestral sonorities.

The work opens quietly and rather enigmatically. The initial tempo is soon accelerated, while the first significant musical activity is concentrated in the lower strings and gradually spreads through the ensemble. The characteristic waltz impulse is therefore not presented immediately as a full-blown ballroom gesture. It seems instead to emerge from the texture.

As the opening develops, the music becomes increasingly animated. The first large section builds through repeated rhythmic figures, melodic fragments and increasingly full string writing. The dynamic reaches f and ff, and the music acquires considerable momentum.

A further expansion follows, where the winds begin to assume a more prominent role alongside the strings. The texture then become considerably richer, with melodic material appearing prominently in the upper strings and winds while the glockenspiel and harp add further colour.

The music subsequently gathers increasing force, culminating in powerful orchestral writing, reaching an especially emphatic ffff before the music begins to withdraw.

Later, the music moves into a markedly darker harmonic region, and the texture becomes spacious and sustained. The dynamic falls back towards mp, creating a pronounced contrast with what has gone before. This is the point at which the word *"Abschied"* begins to acquire more than merely ceremonial significance.

The music remains contemplative through the following pages. Long-held notes in the brass and strings are set against restrained melodic fragments, and the harmonic movement is allowed to unfold with considerable patience. The atmosphere is markedly different from the exuberance of the opening sections.

Eventually the waltz character returns with greater clarity. Yet this is not simply a return to the beginning. The musical material has acquired a new weight, and the darker middle section seems to remain in the background.

The subsequent passages repeatedly alternate between lighter, more transparent textures and increasingly full orchestral statements. The characteristic waltz material becomes increasingly recognisable, with pizzicato strings providing rhythmic support and the upper instruments carrying the melodic line. The music gathers momentum once more and reaches another substantial climax where the orchestra is marked ffff.

There follows another withdrawal, after which the material is rebuilt yet again. This cyclical process gives the work an almost symphonic breadth: the waltz is continually being remembered, transformed and rediscovered rather than simply repeated. Elements of Austrian folk music, alphorn melodies and much else appear and disappear.

The final stages of the work become increasingly extrovert. The orchestra once again gathers considerable force, while the rhythmic material becomes more insistent. The climax is especially emphatic, reaching ffff and bringing together the full orchestral apparatus. Yet Bullock does not allow this to be the final word. The music relaxes once again and the closing pages gradually strip away the accumulated orchestral weight.

Finally the score gives the wonderfully informal instruction *"und ... Servus!" — "and ... goodbye!"* - before the final orchestral gesture. The farewell is therefore both affectionate and slightly theatrical. The work has taken the grand tradition of the Viennese waltz through celebration, nostalgia, darkness and exuberance, and then ends with a simple spoken farewell.

Written in Luxembourg on 27 June 2007, *Abschieds-Walzer* is at once homage, parody, orchestral essay and genuine farewell.

Discussion

There is a dangerous title at the head of Abschieds-Walzer. The moment one writes “waltz”, Johann Strauss is inevitably standing somewhere in the room; add Gustav Mahler to the subtitle and the stakes become even higher. Bullock knows this perfectly well. His inscription, *“with apologies to Johann Strauss and Gustav Mahler,”* is therefore not merely a joke. It tells us how the work should be heard: as a conscious encounter with two very different but historically connected traditions.

Strauss represents the waltz as social music, elegance, movement and pleasure. Mahler, by contrast, repeatedly took inherited dance forms and made them unstable: the waltz could become grotesque, nostalgic, ironic or suddenly tragic. In *Abschieds-Walzer,* Bullock exploits precisely this ambiguity. The work is recognisably a waltz, but it is a waltz that is conscious of its own history.

The opening is particularly revealing. Rather than presenting an immediate ballroom spectacle, Bullock begins with a relatively restrained orchestral texture and allows the dance impulse to emerge gradually. The initial tempo soon increases, and the strings establish much of the early rhythmic energy. The effect is almost theatrical: the curtain rises, but the dance has not yet fully begun.

As the music gathers strength, the orchestra becomes increasingly important as an agent of transformation. The basic waltz rhythm is not merely accompanied; it becomes the foundation upon which an extensive orchestral architecture is constructed.

This is perhaps the most interesting aspect of the work. Bullock does not attempt to reproduce Strauss. The orchestral waltz becomes a language rather than a stylistic costume. Familiar gestures are taken into a much larger harmonic and expressive space.

The enormous orchestra contributes substantially to this effect. With triple-reed colours, a substantial brass section, timpani, side drum, glockenspiel, harp and full strings, Bullock possesses all the resources necessary to make the waltz sound at one moment intimate and at another almost symphonic in scale.

The early music is exuberant, but there is already a sense that something more complicated is being prepared. The successive increases in dynamic and density culminate in passages of extraordinary weight. The orchestra reaches ffff, a long way removed from the apparently innocent world of the ballroom.

Then comes a great change: the music becomes darker and more spacious. The harmonic colour changes radically, and the dynamic retreats towards mp. This is where Mahler's shadow becomes particularly plausible. The waltz is no longer simply something danced; it becomes something remembered.

That distinction is crucial to the meaning of *Abschied*. A farewell is inherently retrospective. One does not merely leave; one looks back at what is being left. Bullock's formal design reflects this psychological process. The energetic waltz material of the opening is followed by a region of suspension and recollection, after which the dance gradually returns.

The slower tempo here is therefore more than a technical change. It permits the waltz to reappear in altered circumstances. The music is recognisable, but it has passed through experience. The use of very soft dynamics is equally significant, allowing the music to become almost chamber-like despite the enormous forces available. This is one of the places where Bullock's orchestration is particularly effective: the size of the orchestra makes restraint more, rather than less, expressive.

The waltz then begins to recover itself. *Pizzicato* strings restore a more explicit rhythmic pulse, while the melodic instruments gradually reclaim the dance character. The music is once again moving. Yet the subsequent climax is not simply a return to youthful exuberance. The enormous ffff dynamic suggests something almost excessive - a final attempt to embrace the world of the waltz in its entirety.

The work's later repetitions of this process are important. Bullock does not follow a simple ABA design. Instead, he continually revisits the same world from different emotional perspectives. The waltz is remembered, intensified, withdrawn and recovered. This is why the work feels considerably larger than its title might imply. It is not merely a character piece. Its 246-bar span is organised through a succession of returns and transformations which give the music a quasi-symphonic trajectory. The final pages confirm this sense of accumulated history: the orchestra again reaches an enormous climax, only to retreat once more.

And then comes the punchline.

"und ... Servus!"

After all the orchestral grandeur, all the Mahlerian suggestion, all the Strauss inheritance and all the accumulated emotional weight, Bullock finishes with an almost conversational farewell. *Servus* is informal, warm and unmistakably Central European. It punctures the grandiosity without destroying the feeling behind it.

That final gesture also casts the entire work in a slightly different light. The piece has never really been trying to out-Strauss Strauss or out-Mahler Mahler. The apology in the title is therefore wonderfully apt. Bullock knows that he is entering territory already occupied by two giants, and his response is not to imitate them slavishly but to have a conversation with them.

The result is a work in which the waltz becomes memory.

The Strauss element provides the social and rhythmic foundation; the Mahlerian element allows that foundation to become unstable, nostalgic and sometimes grandly tragic. Bullock's own contribution lies in the way he allows these worlds to coexist without resolving the tension between them.

There is also something particularly appropriate in the dedication to Harald Feix. The score does not explain the precise circumstances of the farewell, and it would be wrong to invent them. What the music itself makes clear, however, is that this is not a cold or solemn leave-taking. Its farewell contains affection, humour, exuberance and a considerable amount of theatricality. The final *Servus!* says almost everything that is needed.

In the broader catalogue, Abschieds-Walzer is consequently an interesting counterweight to the more overtly serious orchestral works. It demonstrates that Bullock can take a form burdened with historical associations and treat it neither reverentially nor cynically, but with affectionate irreverence. The joke is on the title page, but the music itself is quite sincere. That is why the ending works so well. After Strauss, after Mahler, after the enormous orchestra and the repeated farewells, there is finally only one person saying to another:

Servus.

Festmusik Op. 200

Programme Note

Festmusik, Opus 200, is a work of ceremonial purpose. Its three sections - *Einzug, Interlude* and *Licht* - give the work a clear symbolic progression from public ceremony through inward reflection to illumination.

The opening *Einzug* is deliberately functional in the best sense of the word. It possesses the character of a procession, established immediately through a firm rhythmic profile and strongly articulated string writing. The music moves with purposeful dignity rather than military severity. The repeated rhythmic figures and accumulating layers give the impression of a body of people moving together, while the gradual expansion of the musical texture allows the ceremonial character to emerge naturally.

As the movement progresses, the initial rhythmic impulse becomes increasingly elaborate. Melodic lines emerge from within the accompaniment, and the strings acquire a greater sense of contrapuntal activity. The music repeatedly alternates between strongly articulated statements and passages of greater breadth, so that the procession seems not simply to advance but to gather significance as it proceeds. The large-scale dynamic architecture is especially important: moments of considerable force are followed by spacious, sustained writing, giving the movement a sense of arrival rather than mere forward motion. The later pages of *Einzug* culminate in an extended, resonant conclusion in which sustained sonorities replace the earlier energy.

The *Interlude* provides the essential change of perspective. The large ceremonial orchestra disappears, leaving flute, oboe, harp and strings and the tempo falls. This is not simply a conventional slow movement inserted between two larger sections. Its reduced forces and measured pace create a genuinely intimate space within the work. The opening, with the strings carrying the principal musical thought while the oboe gradually enters, has an expressive and contemplative quality.

The title Interlude is therefore particularly apt. The music suspends the external ceremony and turns inward. Its melodic writing is more conversational, with individual instrumental lines allowed to emerge and recede. The notation later explicitly marks the music *espressivo,* reinforcing the sense that this section is concerned less with public declaration than with personal or collective reflection.

The third section, *Licht,* restores the full orchestral world. Its instrumentation includes the complete wind section, brass, timpani, gong, harp and strings, and the title itself establishes the decisive symbolic idea of the work: light. Yet the music does not begin with an overwhelming blaze of sound. Instead, the opening is remarkably spacious, with the orchestra initially held in reserve. The sense of illumination is consequently something that develops rather than something simply announced.

As Licht unfolds, sustained sonorities, repeated rhythmic figures and increasingly active string textures are brought together. The harp frequently provides a distinctive thread of movement against the more sustained orchestral writing, while the strings generate a continuous internal energy through repeated figures and triplet patterns. The brass, when it enters more decisively, gives the music a ceremonial breadth without destroying the contemplative atmosphere established by the Interlude.

The final stages of the work are characterised by a gradual reconciliation of these two worlds. The rhythmic energy of the opening returns, but it is now experienced in the light of what has intervened. The final pages continue to balance repeated rhythmic figures with broad sustained harmony, producing an ending that feels affirmative without being triumphalist.

Thus *Festmusik* is more than music for a ceremonial occasion. Its three sections create a simple but potent trajectory: entrance, reflection, illumination. The procession of *Einzug* establishes communal identity; the *Interlude* creates a moment of inward attention; and *Licht* transforms the experience into an affirmation of light. The work's symbolism is never forced upon the listener. It is carried principally by musical means — rhythm, sonority, contrast, accumulation and release — allowing the ceremonial purpose and the purely musical argument to reinforce one another.

Discussion

Festmusik belongs to a category in which music has an explicit social or ceremonial function, yet it is not content merely to provide accompaniment to an occasion. Instead, the occasion becomes the starting point for a musical meditation on collective movement, reflection and illumination.

The three-part structure is fundamental to the work. *Einzug, Interlude* and *Licht* are not merely three contrasting pieces placed together. They form a continuous conceptual arc. The first movement is outward-facing: it is concerned with movement, gathering and ceremony. The second turns inward, reducing the orchestral forces and slowing the musical pace. The third returns to the larger ensemble, but the return is transformed by what has happened in the middle. The work therefore possesses a remarkably clear psychological trajectory.

The opening *Einzug* demonstrates Bullock's ability to create ceremonial momentum from relatively simple rhythmic materials. The initial string writing is immediately purposeful, and the music's energy comes less from rapid virtuosity than from repetition, articulation and the gradual accumulation of layers. The effect is that of collective movement. Individual voices remain audible, but they participate in a larger rhythmic body. The orchestral texture subsequently becomes increasingly complex, with contrapuntal figures and sustained sonorities creating a tension between motion and repose. The score's successive dynamic climaxes and retreats reinforce this sense of an unfolding ceremony rather than a conventional sonata-form argument.

What makes the *Interlude* particularly significant is the degree to which Bullock changes not merely the tempo but the scale of musical experience. The huge orchestra is replaced by eight instrumental lines: flute, oboe, harp and strings. The result is almost chamber music within a ceremonial work. The opening is understated, and the musical discourse develops through the interaction of individual voices rather than through massed sonority. The marking *espressivo* later makes explicit the expressive direction that is already implicit in the texture.

This contraction is structurally crucial. Had *Licht* followed *Einzug* directly, the work would have remained essentially an orchestral ceremonial piece. The Interlude changes its meaning. It creates an interior dimension, suggesting that the public ritual has a corresponding private or contemplative experience. The music temporarily withdraws from spectacle and asks the listener to attend to smaller changes of colour, line and harmonic movement.

The return to the full orchestra in *Licht* is therefore not simply a restoration of the opening conditions. The movement is built around a different expressive premise. Its title introduces the central metaphor of illumination, and Bullock's orchestration makes this particularly tangible. The harp's flowing figures, the sustained lines of the winds and strings, the repeated triplet activity in the lower strings and the eventual presence of the brass create a musical space in which light can be understood as both radiance and revelation.

There is also a characteristic Bullock tension between simplicity and abundance. The basic musical materials are not especially complicated in themselves. Repeated rhythmic cells, sustained harmonic fields, stepwise or arched melodic figures and reiterated accompanimental patterns recur throughout the work. What changes is their orchestral context. A simple figure in the strings can become something quite different when surrounded by harp resonance, sustained woodwind lines or emphatic brass sonorities. The musical richness arises through accumulation and juxtaposition rather than through constant invention of new thematic material.

The later pages of *Licht* are especially revealing in this respect. The score repeatedly places sustained melodic or harmonic material against patterns of continuous rhythmic activity. At one point the strings generate dense repeated figures beneath long-held upper lines; elsewhere the texture is reduced before rhythmic activity begins again. This gives the music an almost architectural quality. The listener hears not simply melodies and accompaniments but layers of musical time operating simultaneously.

The ceremonial character of *Festmusik* should therefore not be understood as superficial decoration. It is embedded in the work's fundamental conception. Ceremony is collective time: people move together, listen together and experience transitions together. Bullock translates that idea into musical terms through rhythmic unanimity, repeated gestures, gradual accumulation and large-scale dynamic architecture. Against this collective dimension, the Interlude supplies the necessary individual or inward voice.

The work is also interesting historically within Bullock's output because Opus 200 marks a substantial orchestral statement while remaining remarkably economical in its formal conception. Its architecture can be grasped immediately, yet the internal textures are sufficiently rich to sustain detailed listening. The three titles provide a framework without dictating a literal narrative. *Einzug* means movement into the ceremonial space; *Interlude* suspends that movement; *Licht* provides the culminating idea. The symbolism is therefore structural as much as programmatic.

In this sense, *Festmusik* occupies a distinctive position between functional and absolute music. Perhaps the most striking quality of the work is consequently its sense of transformation through contrast. *Einzug* establishes the community in motion; *Interlude* removes the external trappings and allows the music to become intimate; *Licht* reunites the two dimensions in a broader orchestral affirmation. The work's symbolism is therefore not imposed from outside. It grows organically from the musical design.

This is what makes *Festmusik,* Opus 200, more than a ceremonial occasional piece. It takes a specific ceremonial context and discovers within it a universal musical idea: the movement from entering, through reflection, towards light.

Der Doktor - Faust in Wien Op. 209

Programme Note

Der Doktor – Faust in Wien, Opus 209, was written for Dr David Charlston as a gesture of congratulation and a remembrance of earlier times. The title immediately places the work somewhere between homage and parody. Goethe's Faust is one of the great figures of European intellectual dissatisfaction, but Bullock's *Faust in Wien* approaches him with a distinctly lighter touch, allowing the celebrated scholar to become at once a serious, comic and faintly exasperated musical character.

The work takes as its starting point Faust's opening meditation upon his accumulated learning. He has studied philosophy, medicine, jurisprudence and theology, yet finds himself no closer to the knowledge he desires. The contradiction is central: the more Faust has learned, the more conscious he becomes of what he does not know.

Bullock responds to this paradox not with a solemn philosophical setting but with a remarkably energetic orchestral treatment. The score employs a substantial orchestra including winds, brass, percussion, harp and strings, with a tenor carrying Faust's words. From the outset the music has a sense of movement and nervous energy, with the orchestral texture repeatedly shifting between sharply articulated rhythmic figures, sustained sonorities and more expansive passages.

The setting is particularly effective in the way it treats the words themselves. Faust's learned frustration is not simply sung as a lyrical monologue. Phrases are repeated, fragmented and thrown back into the orchestral texture. The famous declaration concerning his studies returns several times, becoming almost a refrain of intellectual despair.

There is consequently an element of theatricality even though the work is not a conventional operatic scene. The orchestra functions almost as a second character. At times it supports Faust's argument; at others it seems to comment upon, exaggerate or even gently mock him. The rapid changes of tempo are important to this effect. There are sudden accelerations, while slower sections allow the words to acquire greater weight.

One particularly telling passage sets Faust's repeated cry, **"***Da steh ich nun, ich armer Tor und bin so klug als wie zuvor" - "Here I stand, poor fool that I am, and am just as wise as before."* The music gives this familiar confession considerable force, but its repetition also exposes its absurdity. Faust has devoted his life to scholarship and arrived precisely where he began.

The later music intensifies the contrast between intellectual aspiration and comic frustration. Faust recalls the years spent studying and his pupils' restless activity, while the orchestra becomes increasingly animated. The passage around *"herauf, herab und quer und krumm"* is particularly vivid, with the rapid orchestral writing giving a physical energy to the language.

The work ultimately returns to Faust's fundamental question: what does it mean to understand the world? The words *"Daß ich erkenne, was die Welt im Innersten zusammenhält" - that he might recognise what holds the world together at its innermost core* - recur as a central aspiration. The enormous orchestral apparatus surrounding this deceptively simple desire gives it both grandeur and irony.

Der Doktor – Faust in Wien therefore occupies an unusual position between concert work, dramatic monologue and musical portrait. Its humour does not diminish Faust's predicament. On the contrary,

the comedy arises precisely because his intellectual dilemma is so serious. The scholar who has mastered every conventional discipline remains unable to answer the one question that matters most to him. The result is a spirited and affectionate work: a portrait of learning confronted by its own limitations, and perhaps also a musical joke shared between old friends.

Discussion

Der Doktor - Faust in Wien is one of those works whose title tells us immediately how it wants to be heard. It is not simply Faust. The addition of *"in Wien"* places the archetypal German scholar in a particular cultural and theatrical world, while the dedication to Dr David Charlston makes clear that this is also a personal act of friendship and remembrance.

The most striking feature of the piece is the tension between the immense seriousness of its subject and the evident pleasure Bullock takes in its theatrical possibilities. Faust's predicament is existential: he has spent his life acquiring knowledge and discovers that knowledge has not given him wisdom. But the music does not treat this as an abstract philosophical proposition. It turns it into action.

The orchestra is fundamental to that transformation. The scoring is substantial — four woodwind instruments, horn, trumpets, timpani, snare drum, triangle, glockenspiel, harp and strings, with tenor — yet the orchestra is not merely an accompaniment to the voice. It has a conspicuous dramatic personality of its own.

The opening, already brisk, establishes an immediate sense of propulsion. This is an interesting decision. A conventional setting of Faust's opening monologue might begin with gravity and contemplation. Bullock instead begins with energy. Faust is not presented as a static philosopher but as a man whose mind is already in turmoil.

That nervous quality persists throughout the work. Repeated rhythmic figures in the strings and winds create a constantly active background, while the tenor's lines are frequently articulated through short phrases and repeated statements. The effect is almost conversational: Faust thinks, argues, remembers, complains and returns obsessively to the same unresolved questions.

This becomes especially apparent in the treatment of the catalogue of his studies. Philosophy, medicine, jurisprudence and theology are not simply mentioned once and left behind. The words return repeatedly, almost as if Faust is counting the evidence against himself. The musical repetition makes the irony unmistakable. Each discipline represents another achievement, but collectively they merely demonstrate the extent of his failure to find the answer he wants.

The setting of *"Da steh ich nun, ich armer Tor"* is consequently the emotional centre of the work. The phrase is inherently theatrical because Faust suddenly moves from philosophical abstraction to self-recognition. He is the fool who has accumulated learning without attaining understanding. Bullock allows the words to become a recurring dramatic marker, so that the listener feels Faust repeatedly arriving at the same conclusion.

There is something distinctly comic about this circularity.

The comedy is strengthened by the rapid changes of tempo, giving the work a sense of episodic theatrical momentum without requiring separate formal movements. Indeed, one can hear the entire piece as a succession of psychological states rather than conventional movements. Faust's intellectual frustration generates agitation; recollection produces another surge of activity; reflection brings temporary suspension; then the argument begins again.

The orchestration is particularly successful when the music becomes physically animated. The passage describing his pupils moving *"herauf, herab und quer und krumm"* is given corresponding musical energy. The words describe movement, and the orchestra responds with movement. Here Bullock's gift for making textual rhythm generate musical rhythm is especially apparent.

The later treatment of the famous desire to discover *"was die Welt im Innersten zusammenhält"* is more serious. This is the point at which the comedy opens onto something larger. Beneath Faust's impatience and self-mockery lies an entirely genuine hunger for understanding.

That is why the piece works better than a simple parody. Faust is funny because he is recognisably human. The disproportion between what he knows and what he wants to know is ultimately the disproportion between human intellectual achievement and the mysteries of existence.

The orchestral writing mirrors that disproportion. The forces are much larger than would be required merely to accompany a tenor, and the score repeatedly expands into passages of considerable sonorous weight. At the same time, the music is capable of becoming almost grotesquely busy, particularly in the fast sections. The contrast between grandeur and bustle is one of the work's chief expressive resources.

There is also a pleasing circularity in the architecture. Material and text repeatedly return rather than progressing towards a single conventional climax. The passages at which the catalogue of Faust's studies reappears make the sense of obsession increasingly clear. Faust cannot escape the thought that has brought him here. That is the central musical insight of the work. - Faust is trapped inside his own intellect.

The final pages do not need to provide a philosophical solution. Instead, the orchestral writing continues to embody the restless energy that has characterised the work from its beginning. Even at the conclusion, the contrast between sustained orchestral sonorities and rapidly articulated figures remains present, while the score eventually brings the various strands together in a final orchestral gesture.

The date on the manuscript, 1 January 2013, adds a small and rather charming detail to the work's character. It is a substantial piece to emerge as a New Year's Day composition, but perhaps that is entirely appropriate: Faust's endless desire to begin again, to understand more, to search further, belongs naturally to the idea of renewal.

Ultimately *Der Doktor - Faust in Wien* is both affectionate portrait and musical comedy. Its subject is one of the most serious questions imaginable - whether human knowledge can ever reach the essence of things - but Bullock understands that there is comedy in the endless human attempt to answer an unanswerable question. The work's particular charm lies in allowing Faust to be simultaneously learned, frustrated, pompous, ridiculous and profoundly sincere, in other words, very human.

Five Pieces in Classical Style Op. 246

Programme Note

Five Pieces in Classical Style is a collection of deliberate stylistic exercises. Rather than representing an attempt to recreate the Classical period as a whole, the set explores several of its characteristic forms, textures and musical manners from the perspective of a later composer. Each piece takes a particular historical model or convention as its point of departure and asks how convincingly that language can be inhabited without becoming a mere exercise in pastiche.

The opening *Festmarsch* establishes the project through a bright, ceremonial orchestral idiom. Written for full orchestra, with woodwind, brass, timpani and strings, it adopts the directness and clarity of an eighteenth- or early nineteenth-century festive march, with compact phrases, strongly articulated rhythms and a transparent orchestral hierarchy. The writing is deliberately straightforward, allowing the stylistic character to be carried by gesture, balance and orchestral rhetoric rather than by modern complexity.

The second piece turns to a much more specific exercise: a *cadenza* for the third movement of Haydn's Piano Concerto in G major. Here the exercise becomes one of understanding the kind of improvisatory virtuosity expected within a Classical concerto. The cadenza moves between flowing scales, figurations, pauses and contrasting dynamic gestures, seeking to sound like a plausible extension of Haydn's musical world rather than an independently modern composition.

The *Sonatina* provides a further exploration of Classical form and proportion. Its very title places it within the tradition of the compact instrumental work, while the brisk tempo and economical thematic writing give the piece an appropriately light-footed character.

The fourth piece, a *Serenade for Flute and Harp*, moves into a more intimate sound world. The combination of flute and harp is particularly well suited to the graceful, conversational character associated with the serenade, and the work allows Bullock to explore the delicacy and elegance of Classical chamber writing on a reduced scale.

The final piece is perhaps the most historically precise of the five. It is a string-quartet movement explicitly described as being *"in the style of 1804"*. The date is significant: rather than invoking an undifferentiated idea of "Classical" music, Bullock chooses a particular historical moment and attempts to work within its musical assumptions.

Taken together, the five pieces constitute a musical workshop: five encounters with historical style, each approaching the Classical inheritance from a slightly different direction.

Discussion

Five Pieces in Classical Style should be understood principally as a composer's set of stylistic exercises. That distinction is important. The purpose is not to suggest that Bullock wished to become a Classical composer, nor that these works represent an attempt to conceal his own musical identity behind historical imitation. Rather, they demonstrate the value of entering another musical language consciously and temporarily, discovering how it works from within.

The set is therefore almost pedagogical in conception, but not pedagogical in the sense of being elementary. A composer learns enormously by imposing restrictions upon himself. To write convincingly in a particular historical manner requires an awareness of phrase structure, harmonic rhythm, cadence, texture, instrumental balance, rhetoric and proportion. The exercise becomes one of discipline: what can be done within the boundaries of a musical language, and what happens when those boundaries are respected?

The five pieces are especially interesting because they do not all approach the Classical world in the same way. The *Festmarsch* deals principally with orchestral rhetoric. The Haydn *cadenza* confronts the problem of improvisatory freedom within a pre-existing formal framework. The *Sonatina* addresses compact formal construction. The *Serenade* explores instrumental elegance and intimacy. The final string-quartet movement goes further still by specifying a historical year, 1804. The collection thus moves between broad stylistic imitation and increasingly precise historical engagement.

The *Festmarsch* is the most public of the exercises. The full orchestra includes the standard Classical families together with trumpets and timpani, and the opening establishes a firm rhythmic and ceremonial profile. The music's effectiveness depends on the discipline of its gestures: short motifs, repeated rhythmic figures and clearly differentiated instrumental roles. It is precisely the kind of writing in which excess would immediately betray the exercise, because Classical ceremonial music depends so strongly upon proportion.

The Haydn *cadenza* presents a different problem. A cadenza is supposed to stand outside the regular orchestral texture while nevertheless remaining intimately connected with the movement from which it emerges. Bullock's cadenza therefore becomes an exercise in controlled freedom. The score explicitly refers to the preceding scale and employs pauses, dynamic contrasts and changes of momentum, allowing the pianist to move between rhetorical gestures and virtuoso passagework. The interesting point is that the music has to sound spontaneous while being carefully composed - precisely the paradox at the heart of the written Classical cadenza.

The *Sonatina* concentrates the same principles into a small formal structure. Its brisk tempo immediately establishes a sense of lightness and movement. The exercise here is not simply to produce melodies that sound “Classical”, but to sustain the proportions and conversational logic expected of a Classical miniature. The music demonstrates how much can be achieved when the expressive ambitions of a piece are deliberately kept within a compact frame.

The *Serenade for Flute and Harp* provides perhaps the gentlest exercise in the collection. Its instrumentation strips away the weight of the orchestra and makes the relationship between the two instruments itself the principal subject. The flute carries the singing line while the harp supplies both harmonic support and decorative figuration. This is Classical style understood not as a collection of historical formulas but as an aesthetic of balance, grace and economy.

Finally, the *string-quartet movement "in the style of 1804"* is the most pointed experiment. By choosing a precise date rather than simply saying "in the Classical style", Bullock narrows the stylistic field considerably. The exercise becomes historical reconstruction at a much more exact level. The four string voices are required to behave as an integrated conversational ensemble, and the music's harmonic and rhythmic vocabulary is correspondingly disciplined.

There is a certain irony in the collection. Bullock's catalogue is ultimately distinguished by its freedom to move between periods, cultures and expressive languages, yet here he voluntarily restricts that freedom. But that restriction is precisely what makes the pieces valuable. They reveal the composer examining the machinery of style rather than merely using it intuitively.

In retrospect, *Five Pieces in Classical Style* can therefore be regarded as a kind of compositional laboratory. The pieces are not competing with Haydn, Mozart or Beethoven, nor do they need to. Their purpose is more personal: to discover what happens when a modern composer deliberately adopts the manners, proportions and assumptions of an earlier musical world. The answer is a collection that is playful, disciplined and revealing. Beneath the historical disguises, the essential subject is still Bullock himself - a composer testing the flexibility of his craft by seeing how convincingly he can speak in another musical language.

Birthday Serenade for the Grand Duke of Luxembourg Op. 269

Programme Note

Birthday Serenade for the Grand Duke of Luxembourg, Opus 269, is a compact orchestral celebration written in honour of His Royal Highness, the Grand Duke of Luxembourg. The work is scored for a generously constituted orchestra, including triple woodwind, four horns, three trumpets, three trombones, tuba, timpani, triangle, harp and strings.

The title immediately establishes the work's character. This is music for a public occasion, but Bullock does not approach the serenade as a simple ceremonial fanfare. Instead, the work combines ceremonial grandeur with an underlying sense of movement and good humour. It begins briskly and from its opening bars the orchestra is already active, with sustained sonorities and sharply defined instrumental gestures gradually establishing the musical character.

The opening develops through the accumulation of orchestral colour. The strings initially remain relatively restrained while the winds and brass establish broad harmonic statements, after which the texture becomes progressively more animated. The contrast between sustained orchestral sonorities and rhythmic activity is a recurring feature throughout the work.

At rehearsal A, the music gathers considerable energy. The tempo increases and the full orchestra is employed with increasing force. The resulting passage has the extrovert character expected of a birthday celebration, but the music remains carefully controlled: the rhythmic material is repeated and developed rather than simply thrown at the listener as a succession of fanfares.

The subsequent sections alternate between vigorous orchestral writing and more spacious passages. At rehearsal B, the music reaches fff, while the strings and winds are increasingly differentiated in their roles. The orchestral texture then relaxes and begins another process of accumulation.

One of the work's most distinctive characteristics is its use of repeated rhythmic and melodic cells. Rather than depending upon a long, continuous melody, Bullock builds much of the serenade from relatively concise figures which are reiterated, transferred between instrumental groups and progressively intensified. The technique gives the music a strong sense of unity while allowing the orchestral colouring to change continually.

The central portion of the work, beginning around rehearsal C, is particularly animated. The music combines repeated accented figures with longer sustained lines, producing a vigorous contrast between rhythmic propulsion and harmonic breadth.

At rehearsal D, the character becomes somewhat more sharply articulated, with repeated figures and emphatic rhythmic gestures passing through the orchestra. The music subsequently develops through increasingly dense orchestral combinations.

Rehearsal E marks another stage in the process of accumulation. The dynamic level fluctuates between mp, mf and f, while the instrumental groups are brought into increasingly close interaction.

The music then moves towards its principal climax. At rehearsal F the orchestral writing becomes more emphatic, with repeated rhythmic figures and sustained sonorities combining to create a large-scale crescendo of energy. At rehearsal G the music briefly relaxes before beginning another process of expansion.

The final section, beginning at rehearsal H, restores the full celebratory character. The music again becomes forceful and rhythmically insistent before gradually drawing back. The closing bars finally reduce the orchestral weight, with mf and mp dynamics and *pizzicato* appearing in the strings before the music reaches its conclusion.

The effect is that of a celebration which has run its natural course. The music does not conclude with excessive bombast but with a final lightening of the orchestral texture. The serenade has fulfilled its purpose: it has offered brilliance, warmth and ceremonial dignity, while retaining something of the intimacy suggested by the word “serenade”.

Discussion

There is a directness about *Birthday Serenade for the Grand Duke of Luxembourg*. Unlike the symphonies and symphonic poems, there is no need to discover a hidden programme. The occasion is the programme. The work exists to celebrate a birthday, and its musical language is consequently outward-looking, generous and ceremonial. The title and dedication make that purpose explicit.

Yet Bullock does something rather more interesting than simply write a ceremonial piece. The word “serenade”implies a degree of intimacy and personal address which sits intriguingly beside the grandeur of the orchestra. The scoring is considerable: triple woodwind, four horns, three trumpets, three trombones, tuba, timpani, triangle, harp and strings. The work therefore possesses the resources of a substantial concert orchestra while retaining the underlying idea of music offered personally to someone on a special occasion.

The opening establishes this duality. The tempo is lively, but the initial texture is not simply a massive tutti. Different orchestral groups enter and establish their sonorities progressively. The effect is one of a musical celebration coming into being rather than being announced fully formed.

This is a recurrent Bullock technique: energy is created through accumulation. Individual gestures are relatively simple, but they become increasingly compelling as they are layered and repeated. The orchestra is consequently treated almost as a living organism, in which a small rhythmic or harmonic impulse can spread from one section to another.

The acceleration at rehearsal A is an important early transformation. What begins as a ceremonial opening becomes suddenly much more animated. The contrast gives the music a sense of youthful exuberance. A birthday celebration, after all, need not remain dignified throughout; it can become lively, even exuberant.

The writing at rehearsal B reinforces this. The dynamic reaches fff, and the orchestra becomes a powerful collective instrument. But the important point is that Bullock does not simply remain at this level. The music repeatedly relaxes, changes texture and rebuilds its energy.

That process gives the work its formal coherence. Although the rehearsal letters divide the score into identifiable stages - A to H - these are not separate movements. Rather, the music behaves like a single continuous ceremonial arc.

The recurring rhythmic figures are central to this. Bullock frequently uses repeated patterns as the basic building blocks of the orchestral texture. Their repetition gives the music an almost processional quality, while their transfer between instruments prevents the texture from becoming static. The listener recognises the musical identity even when its orchestral clothing changes.

The central pages make this particularly clear. At rehearsal C, the orchestra becomes increasingly rhythmically active, with repeated figures in several instrumental groups and sustained material providing a contrasting layer. The technique produces a characteristic tension between horizontal movement and vertical sonority: the music is simultaneously travelling and standing firmly in place.

At rehearsal D, the rhythmic character becomes still more pronounced. Here the work's ceremonial character is particularly evident, although the writing is not confined to traditional fanfare rhetoric. There is a sense of orchestral machinery at work, with repeated gestures being passed around the ensemble.

This is where the scale of the scoring becomes musically meaningful. The large orchestra is not simply there to make the birthday sound impressive. It allows Bullock to create successive layers of colour. The woodwind, brass, strings and percussion can each assume different functions, so that the same basic musical idea can sound quite different according to its instrumentation.

The harp is particularly interesting in this context. It is not used as a dominant solo instrument but as part of the orchestral colouring, contributing another timbral dimension to the larger ensemble. This is typical of the work's general approach: colour is integrated into the musical argument rather than presented as isolated decoration.

Rehearsal E introduces another stage of development. The dynamics move between mp, mf and f, allowing the music to breathe rather than simply pushing continuously towards its climax. This is important because the work could easily have become overburdened by its ceremonial purpose. Instead, Bullock continually varies the intensity.

The later climax around rehearsal F is consequently prepared rather than imposed. The orchestra gradually acquires greater weight, rhythmic figures become increasingly insistent and the sustained sonorities become more substantial. The effect is celebratory, but it is also structurally satisfying because the listener has been led there through several previous cycles of tension and release.

The relaxation at rehearsal G is therefore equally important. The tempo changes and the music begins another process of gathering itself. This prevents the climax at F from functioning as a premature ending and gives the final section its own trajectory.

At H, the music again expands. Yet the ending ultimately moves in the opposite direction. Rather than ending with an overwhelming orchestral chord, Bullock allows the dynamics to fall and introduces *pizzicato* into the closing texture.

That is a particularly apt conclusion for a serenade. The music begins as a public celebration but ends on a lighter, more intimate note. It is almost as though the ceremonial orchestra has withdrawn, leaving the personal gesture behind.

There is therefore a pleasing balance throughout the work between public and private, grandeur and intimacy, rhythmic vitality and repose. The birthday provides the occasion for celebration, but the serenade provides the manner of address.

In the larger context of Bullock's non-symphonic orchestral music, *Birthday Serenade* is valuable precisely because it does not pretend to be a symphony, tone poem or major statement. It is an occasional work, but "occasional" need not mean musically slight. Bullock uses the occasion as an opportunity to explore orchestral colour, repetition, accumulation and ceremonial rhetoric on a concentrated scale.

Its position among these miscellaneous orchestral works is therefore quite revealing. Here is Bullock taking the orchestra - with all its potential for grandeur - and using it for something fundamentally simple and human: to wish someone a happy birthday. There is something rather appealing about that lack of pretension. The work celebrates its subject wholeheartedly, but it does not take itself too seriously. Its exuberance, its repeated rhythmic gestures and its gradual retreat into the quieter *pizzicato* ending all suggest a composer enjoying the possibilities of the orchestra while keeping firmly in view the personal reason for which the music exists.

Elegy For Those Who Never Met Op. 265

Programme Note

Elegy "for those who never met …", Opus 265, is a brief work for strings and harp, composed in Hinterthal on 24 October 2017. Its expressive world is established immediately by the very slow tempo, the muted strings and the restrained dynamic indications of the opening. The music begins quietly, almost as though the listener is entering an already existing memory rather than witnessing the beginning of an event.

The opening texture is remarkably concentrated. The divided string writing is predominantly sustained and soft, while the inner voices establish a gently repeated rhythmic pattern. Above and beneath this, the harp contributes a recurring figure whose movement gives the otherwise static texture a quiet pulse. The result is neither dramatic nor overtly mournful. It is music of contemplation, in which repetition becomes a means of holding a thought in the mind.

Against this restrained background, longer melodic phrases emerge in the upper strings and cello. They are not presented as a conventional melody accompanied by harmony; rather, they seem to grow naturally out of the surrounding texture. The muted sonority is particularly important to the character of the music, creating a sense of distance and intimacy at the same time.

The central portion of the *Elegy* gradually increases in intensity. The musical material becomes more animated and the dynamic rises, but the underlying character remains reflective. The repeated figures continue to provide continuity while the sustained voices above them become increasingly expressive. The music therefore develops without abandoning its original atmosphere. At rehearsal A, the texture is renewed with a slightly more prominent melodic presence in the upper strings. The harp's recurrent figure continues almost as a heartbeat beneath the ensemble. The emotional effect is subtle: the music seems to move forward while remaining inward-looking.

The later pages bring the work towards its greatest expressive intensity. The string writing becomes fuller and the melodic lines acquire greater breadth. Yet there is no conventional climax in which grief is violently discharged. Instead, the music seems to arrive at a deeper acceptance of its own quiet melancholy.

At rehearsal B the texture begins to withdraw. The dynamics fall through mp, p and pp, and the music once again becomes increasingly spacious. The final pages are particularly poignant because the melodic voices are allowed to linger over the continuing harmonic and rhythmic framework.

The ending is not a decisive conclusion but a disappearance. The final bars retain the gentle rhythmic motion of the harp while the strings sustain their final sonorities, eventually reaching pp before the music falls silent.

The title, *for those who never met …*, deliberately leaves the nature of the absence unspecified. Nothing in the score supplies a literal narrative, and the work is strongest when that ambiguity is preserved. It can be heard as an elegy for people separated by death, circumstance or time; equally, it can suggest the sadness of relationships that never came into being. The ellipsis in the title is important: the thought is left unfinished, just as the music itself refuses to offer a final rhetorical resolution.

What remains is a small, intimate meditation on absence. The work does not attempt to describe grief so much as to create a space in which remembrance and imagined connection can exist.

Discussion

An elegy traditionally commemorates someone who has been known and subsequently lost, whereas Bullock's title speaks of *"those who never met"*. The work therefore concerns an absence that precedes memory. It is an elegy not necessarily for something once possessed, but for something that might have been.

The music is entirely consistent with that idea. Its opening is extraordinarily restrained. The strings enter softly and with mutes, establishing a sonority that is deliberately removed from the brilliance of an unmuted string ensemble. The first impression is therefore one of distance: sound is present, but it seems to come from somewhere beyond the immediate physical world.

The harp is crucial. Its recurring figure provides the music with a pulse without turning that pulse into a conventional rhythmic accompaniment. It is almost physiological in its effect. The figure continues while the sustained string voices above it change, breathe and respond. This creates one of the most compelling aspects of the piece: the music is simultaneously static and moving.

The repeated rhythmic patterns in the strings have a similar function. They create continuity, but they also suggest the persistence of thought. A figure returns, slightly altered by its harmonic context, just as a memory can return repeatedly without ever being exactly the same memory.

The melodic writing is consequently more significant because it emerges from this repetition rather than being imposed upon it. The long upper-string and cello phrases seem almost to hover above the recurring accompaniment. Their expressive character is heightened by the muted sonority and by the very slow tempo. The music has no need to announce its sorrow; the restraint itself communicates it.

There is also a striking avoidance of theatricality. Even when the dynamics increase in the middle of the work, Bullock does not turn the *Elegy* into a conventional tragic climax. The emotional trajectory is gradual and inward. At rehearsal A, for example, the music becomes somewhat more active and expressive, but the basic architecture remains intact: recurring harp movement, repeated string figures and sustained melodic voices.

This makes the piece feel less like a narrative of grief than a meditation upon absence.

The harmonic language contributes strongly to this impression. The harmony is not presented as a succession of clearly articulated tonal destinations. Instead, sonorities seem to change from within the texture. Notes are sustained while other voices move around them, so that the listener experiences harmonic transformation as a gradual alteration of colour. This is particularly effective in a piece whose subject is something that cannot be directly represented.

The central intensification consequently has an unusual expressive quality. The music grows more substantial, but the increase in volume does not correspond to an increase in rhetorical certainty. The work becomes fuller without becoming more explicit. It is as though the emotional significance of the subject is becoming clearer while its actual meaning remains unknowable.

The withdrawal at rehearsal B is therefore especially important. The dynamics diminish through mp, p and pp, and the texture becomes increasingly spare. The work does not end by resolving its emotional question. Instead, it gradually relinquishes the question.

The final bars are consequently among the most eloquent. The strings sustain their last sonorities while the harp retains its gentle figuration, and the music finally settles into pp. There is no grand

final chord, no emphatic cadence and no gesture of consolation imposed upon the listener. The music simply ceases.

That ending gives particular weight to the ellipsis in the title. *For those who never met …* is grammatically incomplete, and the musical ending is similarly open. The listener is left to supply what cannot be said.

The score provides a musical language capable of expressing the emotional territory of unfulfilled connection without defining precisely what that connection might have been. In this respect, *Elegy* is a remarkably intimate work. Its forces are modest, its duration is short, and its materials are deliberately economical, yet the combination of muted strings, slow harmonic movement and the persistent harp figure creates a surprisingly large emotional space. The music's emotional force comes from what it withholds.

Chanson Triste Op. 268

Programme Note

Chanson Triste, Opus 268, is a work whose title seems almost to provide its own invitation to listen: a sad song, but a song without words. The work is entirely orchestral, yet its musical language is unmistakably song-like. Bullock creates an extended meditation in which melody, accompaniment and colour gradually reveal an underlying emotional landscape.

The score begins at a moderate tempo, and the opening texture is strikingly spare. The strings establish the principal atmosphere, with the first violin carrying a long, sustained melodic line while the lower strings provide a quiet harmonic foundation. The second violin and viola introduce gently articulated accompanying figures, and the pizzicato double bass gives the opening a discreet pulse. The winds are initially silent, which gives their eventual appearances a particular expressive significance.

The music develops through a succession of closely related episodes rather than sharply differentiated sections. The principal melodic character remains lyrical and restrained, while the orchestration continually changes around it. Instruments enter and withdraw, textures become fuller and then recede, and the same basic emotional world is viewed from different perspectives.

The title *Chanson Triste* should therefore not be understood simply as a declaration of sadness. There is considerable tenderness in the music, and the sadness is often contemplative rather than tragic. Bullock allows the listener to remain within the feeling rather than forcing it towards a dramatic conclusion. The frequent use of sustained lines, soft dynamics and carefully graduated *crescendi* contributes to an atmosphere of inward reflection.

The string writing is particularly important. The first violin repeatedly assumes the role of a singer, its long phrases unfolding above gently pulsing or sustained accompaniment. At other moments the melodic responsibility is distributed among the orchestral instruments, so that the “song” becomes a collective utterance rather than a single voice. The *divisi* writing in the strings further enlarges the harmonic space without destroying the intimacy of the music.

The winds gradually become more prominent, enriching rather than fundamentally changing the character of the piece. Their entries seem almost like memories entering an already established emotional world. The music consequently possesses a sense of recollection: something is being remembered, but the memory is never fully articulated.

As the work progresses, the dynamics rise towards stronger passages, but Bullock avoids turning the material into conventional orchestral melodrama. Even when the music reaches f and ff, the expressive impulse remains connected to the quiet lyricism of the opening. The climactic moments consequently feel like intensifications of feeling rather than departures from the work's essential character.

The final pages return to the atmosphere of the opening. The music has once again become quiet and spacious, and the score concludes without a theatrical gesture. The final impression is therefore one of acceptance rather than resolution: the sadness has not necessarily disappeared, but it has been contemplated, shaped and given musical form. *Chanson Triste* is, in this sense, a true song without words. Its subject is not a particular narrative but the experience of remembering, longing and quietly acknowledging what cannot be changed.

Discussion

Chanson Triste. “Sad song” might suggest a miniature, perhaps a salon piece or an uncomplicated lyrical movement. Bullock's *Chanson Triste,* however, is considerably more substantial. Extending to almost two hundred bars, it is an extended orchestral meditation whose apparent simplicity conceals a carefully controlled process of variation, accumulation and withdrawal.

What is immediately striking is the decision to begin with such modest forces. The orchestration includes flute, oboe, clarinet, bassoon and horn alongside the full string body, but the opening does not exploit the orchestra as a mass. Instead, the music begins almost as chamber music. The first violin sings above a quiet string texture, while the lower strings establish an understated foundation.

This is an important clue to the nature of the work. The title's *“chanson”* is not represented by an actual vocal line; rather, the first violin assumes the psychological role of a singer. The melodic writing is predominantly linear and sustained, with phrases that seem to breathe naturally. The accompaniment is equally important because it refuses to compete with the melody. It creates the space in which the melody can exist. The first violin begins mp, while the accompanying strings are predominantly p or mp, with the cello sustaining and the double bass using *pizzicato*. There is therefore a subtle distinction between sustained and articulated time: the violin seems to float above a pulse which is present but deliberately understated.

That opposition becomes one of the work's most characteristic features. Bullock repeatedly alternates between sustained melodic surfaces and more clearly articulated rhythmic figures. The latter never become aggressively rhythmic; they function instead as the quiet movement of the emotional landscape beneath the melody.

The music also has a strong sense of continuity. The sectional letters - A, B, C, D, E and F - suggest formal landmarks, but the musical argument does not become fragmented into independent episodes. Instead, each new section seems to be a reconsideration of material that has already been heard. This gives the piece an almost ruminative quality. A sad thought rarely occurs only once. It returns, perhaps slightly changed, perhaps seen from another angle. Bullock's formal procedure reflects precisely that psychological experience.

The orchestration is correspondingly fluid. At several points the woodwind instruments emerge from silence to colour the string texture, only to retreat again. The central sections reveal another important aspect of Bullock's technique: his ability to create emotional intensity without abandoning restraint. The music reaches strong dynamic levels — including f, ff and fff — but these passages grow organically from the quiet material that precedes them. The effect is less that of an imposed climax than of accumulated feeling finally becoming impossible to contain. The orchestral texture becomes much more active, with winds and strings participating together in a denser sonority. Yet the underlying melodic character remains recognisable. The climax consequently feels like the emotional enlargement of the opening rather than a new musical idea.

The work's melancholy is therefore never merely decorative. It is built into the relationship between continuity and interruption, between singing lines and measured accompaniment, and between intimacy and orchestral expansion.

There is also a subtle connection between the title and Bullock's broader conception of melody. The “song” is not necessarily a melody in the conventional sense of a tune that can be separated from its accompaniment. Instead, songfulness becomes a property of the musical texture itself. The first

violin may sing, but later the winds, lower strings and divided strings share that function. The result is a kind of orchestral polyphony of remembrance.

The string writing is especially characteristic. The frequent *divisi* indications allow the string body to become harmonically spacious while retaining the warmth of a single instrumental family. There is an almost vocal quality in the way sustained notes are layered one above another, while the more articulated figures underneath suggest breathing, movement and the passing of time.

The final section is perhaps the most important evidence that Chanson Triste is not simply a miniature tone poem ending in a grand statement. After the considerable activity of the middle and later sections, the music gradually withdraws. The conclusion is particularly restrained. The musical space is allowed to become still. This ending is entirely consistent with the title. A *Chanson Triste* does not need to "solve" sadness. Its purpose is to give sadness a voice.

What makes the work interesting, however, is that Bullock does not equate sadness with darkness. The prevailing atmosphere is one of tenderness and reflection. Even the stronger passages retain something of the vulnerability established at the beginning. There is no attempt to transform melancholy into heroic tragedy. Instead, the music accepts melancholy as a legitimate emotional state in itself.

In that sense, *Chanson Triste* belongs to the more intimate side of Bullock's orchestral writing. It demonstrates that the composer who can work on a large symphonic scale is equally interested in the expressive possibilities of restraint. The orchestra becomes not a vehicle for spectacle but a means of remembering.

The work's deepest quality is consequently its quiet persistence. A melody begins, disappears, returns; textures gather and disperse; intensity rises and falls. Nothing is hurried. The music seems to understand that certain feelings cannot be argued away. They can only be allowed to sing.

Festive Overture ‘Pike’s Peak’ Op. 281

Programme Note

Festive Overture *“Pike’s Peak”* was composed in Senheim on 20–21 October 2018 for Andreas Rolfs and the Albert Pike Preceptory in Hannover. It is conceived on a substantial orchestral scale, employing full woodwind and brass, timpani, tubular bells and strings.

The overture begins with striking economy. At a brisk tempo, the music is launched not by a full orchestral chord but by rapidly moving figures in the strings. Violin I and II establish an energetic descending and ascending motion which is soon extended through the lower strings. The effect is one of immediate propulsion: the music appears already to be in motion when the curtain rises.

This restless string writing forms one of the principal characteristics of the work. Rather than functioning merely as accompaniment, the strings provide a continuous kinetic foundation against which the wind and brass instruments can make their more emphatic interventions. The opening pages progressively expand this texture, with the different string sections taking up related figurations and creating a broad sense of upward and downward movement.

The first major orchestral transformation occurs when the woodwind and brass begin to enter with sharply defined rhythmic gestures. At rehearsal A the strings continue their flowing motion while sustained and articulated instrumental statements appear above them. The music therefore acquires two contrasting layers: the almost perpetual motion of the strings and the more monumental declarations of the orchestra.

As the overture develops, these elements become increasingly integrated. The rhythmic gestures of the brass are repeatedly answered or supported by the string figures, while the texture expands and contracts in waves. The music can suddenly become spacious, only for the underlying motion to resume and propel it forward again.

At rehearsal B, a particularly powerful orchestral statement brings the woodwind, brass and strings together. The sustained lines of the upper instruments are set against the continuing activity below, producing one of the work's first genuinely monumental moments.

The character changes significantly at rehearsal C. Here Bullock introduces the Templar Hymn, *“Da Pacem Domine”*. The sudden appearance of this chorale-like material creates a moment of stillness and reflection within the otherwise highly active overture. The strings sustain long lines while the hymn emerges in the lower brass, giving the music a ceremonial and contemplative character.

The hymn is not simply inserted as an isolated quotation. It becomes a point around which the subsequent music is organised. The material is repeated and redistributed through the brass, while the sustained string writing provides a spacious harmonic background. At rehearsals C–D, the music gradually regains its earlier rhythmic vitality, eventually returning to the energetic language of the opening.

Later, at rehearsal D, Bullock reverses the earlier process. The woodwind become increasingly prominent, with solo entries passing from flute and oboe to clarinet and bassoon, while the strings remain largely silent. This creates a chamber-like episode within the large orchestral conception and allows the individual colours of the wind instruments to be heard with unusual clarity.

The music subsequently gathers renewed strength. Rhythmic figures pass between the woodwind, brass and strings, and the overture progressively returns to its more extrovert orchestral character. The contrast between rapid figurations and sustained sonorities remains central to the work's construction.

Towards the end, Bullock brings the principal elements together. The woodwind once again articulate sharply defined figures, the brass contribute increasingly emphatic statements, and the strings return to their characteristic rapid motion. At rehearsal G the orchestra reaches a particularly concentrated tutti, with the woodwind in unison and the brass reinforcing the gesture.

The conclusion does not abandon the energetic character established at the opening. Instead, the music drives towards a broad, emphatic orchestral ending, bringing together the rhythmic vitality and ceremonial breadth that have characterised the overture throughout. The final pages culminate in an emphatic unison orchestral statement before the work comes to rest.

Discussion

Pike's Peak is an interesting work because its apparent simplicity of purpose conceals a fairly carefully organised dramatic structure. It is called a festive overture, and it certainly possesses the outward energy associated with that designation, but Bullock gives the music a central point of gravity in the form of the Templar Hymn *"Da Pacem Domine."* That insertion changes the way the whole work can be heard.

The opening is particularly characteristic. The orchestra is large, but Bullock initially withholds almost all of it. Instead, the listener is confronted with the rapid movement of the strings. The first page already establishes the basic principle: continuous motion below, followed by the gradual arrival of larger orchestral forces.

This is an effective way of generating momentum. The music does not need to announce itself with a massive opening chord because its energy is inherent in the movement of the lines. The repeated semiquaver figures give the impression of ascent and descent, and the fact that they migrate between different string sections creates a sense of a large musical mechanism gradually coming to life.

There is something significant, too, about Bullock's choice to make the strings the initial engine of the music. The brass and percussion are available from the outset, but they are held back. When they eventually enter, their gestures consequently possess greater rhetorical weight. The contrast between the two types of writing - flowing string motion and strongly articulated orchestral proclamation - becomes one of the work's fundamental structural devices.

The music at rehearsal A demonstrates this particularly clearly. The strings continue their rapid figures while the upper instruments begin to make short, emphatic statements. The result is not simply melody accompanied by figuration; rather, the two layers have different dramatic functions. The strings create propulsion, while the winds and brass establish landmarks.

This becomes increasingly pronounced before rehearsal B, where the orchestra suddenly acquires much greater vertical weight. The sustained brass writing and the activity of the strings are combined into a substantial orchestral sonority.

Then comes the crucial intervention of the Templar Hymn, *Da Pacem Domine* The effect is striking because the music has been moving with considerable rhythmic energy, whereas the hymn is presented through sustained tones and a much more spacious texture. The strings, previously the principal agents of motion, now hold long notes beneath the brass.

This gives the overture a centre of repose. More importantly, it prevents *Pike's Peak* from being simply a continuous sequence of festive orchestral gestures. There is now a moment of remembrance, peace or ceremony embedded within the work. The title of the hymn itself - *Da Pacem Domine* - makes the contrast with the energetic outer sections especially suggestive, although the score does not provide a programme explaining the relationship.

Bullock then allows the hymn material to become increasingly integrated into the surrounding orchestral language. The brass take up its characteristic contours while the rhythmic activity gradually returns. The effect is almost that of emerging from stillness rather than simply changing sections.

The subsequent wind episode at rehearsal D is another important feature. Flute, oboe, clarinet and bassoon appear successively as solo voices, creating a remarkable contrast with the full orchestral

sonorities elsewhere in the score. Here Bullock demonstrates that the large orchestra is not being used simply for volume. He is interested in colour and in the possibilities of withdrawing the orchestra so that individual voices can speak.

The later return to the full orchestral texture consequently has greater impact. The overture's form can be understood as a repeated alternation between motion and proclamation, intimacy and grandeur, activity and repose. These oppositions are not incidental effects but constitute much of the work's musical rhetoric.

The final pages bring the different dimensions together. At rehearsal G, the woodwind are united in a strongly articulated statement, while the brass and strings contribute their own layers of activity. The music has by this point moved a long way from the relatively spare opening, yet the original kinetic principle remains recognisable.

The final orchestral unison is particularly appropriate. After the many divisions of the orchestra into contrasting instrumental groups, Bullock ultimately brings the forces together. The score marks the final passage “unison”, with the whole orchestra converging upon the concluding gesture.

Seen in this light, *Pike’s Peak* is not merely a festive curtain-raiser. It is a compact orchestral drama in which energy is repeatedly interrupted by reflection and then released again. The Templar Hymn provides the work with its spiritual and ceremonial centre, while the rapid string writing provides its physical energy.

There is also an appealing tension between the title *Pike’s Peak* and the music itself. The score does not state explicitly what the title signifies or whether the work is intended to depict the Colorado mountain, so it would be unwise to impose a literal programme upon it. Nevertheless, the persistent sense of ascent, descent, surge and accumulation in the string writing makes the title an evocative one. The music continually seems to be climbing towards something, reaching a summit, withdrawing, and beginning the ascent again.

Ultimately, the overture's achievement lies in its combination of ceremonial purpose and genuine musical movement. Its festive character is unmistakable, but it is balanced by the gravity of *Da Pacem Domine* and by the quieter wind writing that surrounds it. The result is a work that can celebrate without becoming superficial: vigorous, ceremonial, colourfully orchestrated and, at its centre, unexpectedly contemplative.

Festmusik 2 Op. 270

Programme Note

Festmusik 2 is a work about celebration, but it approaches celebration from several different directions. Rather than treating festive music as a single orchestral language, the work divides the idea into five contrasting musical experiences, each concerned with a different aspect of communal and personal expression.

The opening Fest 1 is outward-looking and ceremonial. Brass and timpani establish an atmosphere of public occasion, with strong rhythmic impulses alternating with sustained harmonic sonorities. The music possesses the directness appropriate to a festive gathering, but even here the writing is not simply a sequence of fanfares. Rhythmic figures pass between the instrumental groups, and the music repeatedly moves between weight and movement, solidity and animation.

The second section, Fest 2, makes an abrupt change of scale. The large ceremonial ensemble is replaced by only flute and cello. The contrast is deliberate: after the collective voice of the brass comes something closer to conversation. The two instruments exchange phrases of differing character, sometimes complementary and sometimes apparently independent, while the music retains the forward-moving rhythmic energy established at the beginning. Celebration here becomes something intimate rather than public.

Fest 3 turns towards the string ensemble and, with its instruction with great expression and slower tempo, introduces the most overtly lyrical element of the work. The music breathes more freely, and sustained lines coexist with *pizzicato* and more rhythmically active passages. The result is neither a slow interlude nor a conventional string movement, but a meditation on the more reflective side of celebration: memory, companionship and the emotional significance that lies beneath a public occasion.

The fourth section, Fest 4, is perhaps the most unexpected. The melodic instruments disappear and an extensive percussion ensemble takes over. Bass drum, castanets, maracas, snare drum, taiko, wood blocks, tuned percussion, marimba, vibraphones and celesta create a constantly shifting rhythmic environment. The music is driven by repetition and accumulation. Individual patterns are relatively simple, but their superimposition creates an increasingly complex collective energy. Celebration becomes rhythm itself — physical, communal and almost ritualistic.

The final Fest 5 brings the full orchestra together. Woodwind, brass, strings and timpani now participate in a musical world that has been prepared by everything that has preceded it. The ceremonial character of the opening returns, but it has been transformed by the intimate, lyrical and rhythmic experiences of the intervening sections. The work thus closes not by returning simply to its beginning, but by gathering its separate conceptions of festivity into a single orchestral statement.

The five sections may therefore be heard as five perspectives on the same idea: public ceremony, intimate encounter, lyrical reflection, collective rhythm and finally synthesis. The title *Festmusik* consequently has a wider meaning than music merely intended for a festive occasion. It becomes an exploration of what celebration itself can mean.

Discussion

Festmusik 2 suggests ceremonial music, perhaps music written for a particular occasion, and the opening of the work certainly seems to confirm that expectation. Yet the conception revealed by the complete score is much more unusual. *Festmusik 2* is not simply one festive composition but a sequence of five sharply differentiated musical worlds. Its underlying subject is therefore less "festive music" as a genre than the changing nature of celebration itself.

The formal conception is particularly striking because the work proceeds through instrumental subtraction and accumulation. *Fest 1* employs brass and timpani, producing a sound that is public, authoritative and ceremonial. The opening tempo gives the music a purposeful momentum, while sustained brass sonorities provide the harmonic foundation against which shorter rhythmic gestures emerge. The music is already characterised by an important Bullockian principle: energy is created not merely through speed or volume, but through the interaction of contrasting durations and instrumental roles. The sustained and the rhythmic coexist.

The transition to *Fest 2* therefore has considerable expressive significance. The enormous brass sonority suddenly gives way to flute and cello. This is not merely a change of instrumentation; it changes the social character of the music. The first section speaks to a crowd, whereas the second appears to speak between two individuals. The flute's agile melodic writing and the cello's answering gestures create a dialogue whose rhythmic vitality prevents the music from becoming merely lyrical. Even in this reduced setting, the idea of festivity survives, but it has been internalised.

The third section deepens that process. The string ensemble is instructed to play with great expression and the writing immediately acquires a more spacious and contemplative quality. Sustained tones, pizzicato figures and contrapuntal exchanges coexist, allowing the music to oscillate between intimacy and collective sonority. The strings are particularly well suited to this role because they can function simultaneously as individual voices and as a homogeneous body. That duality becomes central to the movement's expressive character.

The fourth section radically redefines the work. The percussion ensemble occupies almost thirty pages, and the visual density of the score reflects its compositional method. Instead of melodic development in the conventional sense, the music depends upon repeated rhythmic cells, layered *ostinati,* accents and carefully staggered entries. The instrumentation is extraordinarily varied, extending from bass drum and taiko to castanets, maracas, wood blocks and tuned percussion. The use of 9/8 and the instruction that dynamics are *ad lib*. contribute to a sense of rhythmic freedom within a highly organised framework.

What is especially effective here is the distinction between simplicity and complexity. Many individual rhythmic components are simple, sometimes almost elemental. Their complexity emerges through simultaneous layering. The result is a collective energy that cannot be attributed to any single instrument. In that respect Fest 4 may actually be the most literal expression of the work's conception: celebration is not something that belongs to an individual voice but something generated when separate voices participate in a common rhythmic space.

The return to the orchestra in *Fest 5* consequently carries considerable structural weight. The full ensemble is restored, with woodwind, brass, strings and timpani once again occupying the same musical space. But the listener now hears the opening ceremonial vocabulary differently. It has been refracted through four preceding experiences. The brass no longer represents the whole idea of celebration; it represents one of its possibilities. The lyrical quality discovered in the strings, the

intimacy of the flute and cello and the physical rhythmic force of the percussion have all expanded the expressive field.

The final section also demonstrates a characteristic feature of the work's construction: repetition is used as transformation. Materials and rhythmic procedures recur, but their meaning changes according to the instrumental context. The score's final pages show the orchestra arriving at increasingly sustained and integrated sonorities, while the strings introduce rapid triplet activity beneath the longer orchestral lines. The music thus ends with both motion and repose present at the same time.

Seen as a whole, *Festmusik 2* is therefore less a suite of five unrelated pieces than a carefully conceived progression from the external to the internal and back again. It begins with public ceremony, moves through dialogue and reflection, descends into the elemental physicality of rhythm, and finally returns to the full communal orchestra. The architecture is almost circular, but the return is not a simple restoration of the beginning. The listener has acquired a different understanding of what the opening gesture meant.

This is perhaps the most interesting aspect of the work. Celebration is shown not as a single emotional state but as a spectrum of human experience. There is the ceremonial, the conversational, the contemplative, the physical and the collective. By separating these aspects and then bringing them together again, *Festmusik 2* turns what might initially appear to be occasional music into something more structurally and psychologically ambitious.

In that sense, the title is perfectly chosen. The work is indeed *Festmusik,* but it asks what that term can encompass. Its answer is surprisingly broad: the sound of ceremony, the sound of two people communicating, the sound of memory and feeling, the sound of bodies moving together in rhythm, and finally the sound of a community reunited in one orchestral voice.

Evelyn’s Evergreens Op. 316

Programme Note

Evelyn's Evergreens, Opus 316, is one of those pieces whose significance lies as much in the reason for its existence as in its musical substance. It was written for Evelyn, the composer's granddaughter, and is dedicated simply and affectionately *“for Evelyn, my wonderful granddaughter.”*

The work takes a handful of songs that were favourites of Evelyn at the time and turns them into a small orchestral sequence. There is no attempt to disguise their origins or to transform them into something solemnly “classical”. Instead, the familiar tunes are allowed to remain recognisable while being dressed in an orchestral language that is unmistakably the composer's own.

The scoring itself tells much of the story. Flute, oboe, clarinet and bassoon are joined by glockenspiel, guitar and a small string section of two violins, cello and double bass. The guitar provides an especially immediate connection with the world of children's and popular songs, while the glockenspiel contributes a bright, almost magical colour. Against these, the four woodwind instruments can provide both melodic character and a surprisingly sophisticated harmonic accompaniment.

The opening establishes the nature of the piece immediately. The guitar and *pizzicato* lower strings provide a light rhythmic foundation while the winds introduce the melodic material. There is no grand orchestral preamble. The music simply begins, almost as though someone has started to play a favourite song in the room.

The subsequent sections vary the treatment of the melodies considerably. Sometimes a tune is presented clearly by one of the wind instruments; elsewhere it is shared between instruments or surrounded by repeated accompanimental figures. The orchestration continually changes the perspective without destroying the simplicity of the underlying songs.

There is also a striking contrast between the different tempos and characters. After the relaxed opening, the music moves through faster and more animated passages before reaching a slower section. Later, the music again becomes more active. The changes give the work the character of a little suite rather than a single uninterrupted arrangement.

The middle of the piece is particularly interesting in its harmonic colouring. At rehearsal C the music moves into a slower, darker region, with the strings carrying increasingly expressive lines and the woodwind temporarily withdrawing. The contrast is not allowed to become gloomy, however. The lightness of the original conception remains present beneath the more reflective writing.

The later sections progressively restore the energy of the opening. The guitar's rhythmic role becomes particularly prominent, while the strings and winds exchange melodic and accompanimental functions. The glockenspiel appears as a distinctive colour rather than merely a novelty instrument, adding a brightness that is entirely appropriate to the work's subject.

Towards the conclusion the music becomes increasingly animated, bringing together the various instrumental colours that have appeared throughout the piece. The final pages then gradually simplify the texture before the music reaches its quiet conclusion. The manuscript records the date Senheim, 26th July 2021.

What makes Evelyn's Evergreens particularly touching is its preservation of a very specific moment in childhood. The songs were Evelyn's favourites then. The arrangement consequently does more than preserve melodies: it preserves a little piece of the world in which those melodies mattered to her. It is music written by a grandfather for his granddaughter, but it avoids sentimentality. Its affection is expressed through the care with which the songs have been arranged, the imagination of the orchestration and the sheer pleasure of making music from things that Evelyn loved.

After the symphonies, symphonic poems, ceremonial works and other orchestral explorations, the orchestra is reduced to something intimate and personal.

Discussion

It is tempting, when writing about a composer's catalogue, to concentrate on the works that appear to carry the greatest weight: the symphonies, the large-scale dramatic pieces, the works with historical or philosophical subjects. *Evelyn's Evergreens,* Opus 316, quietly challenges that hierarchy. It is a small arrangement of songs that a child loved.

The work is dedicated *"for Evelyn, my wonderful granddaughter"*, and the title identifies the songs as her *"evergreens"*. The word is affectionate and slightly humorous. These are not necessarily "evergreens" in the conventional musical sense; they are evergreens because they have taken root in one particular child's imagination.

That changes the nature of the compositional task. The objective is not to improve the songs, nor to demonstrate how cleverly they can be transformed. It is to make something that Evelyn can recognise and enjoy while giving the material enough musical substance to interest the composer himself.

The orchestration is therefore crucial. The ensemble is small but remarkably varied: four woodwind instruments, glockenspiel, guitar and five strings. It occupies a fascinating position between chamber ensemble and miniature orchestra. The guitar is perhaps the most revealing choice. It immediately evokes the informal world from which many familiar songs emerge. It provides harmonic and rhythmic support without the weight of a piano or full orchestral accompaniment. The glockenspiel, meanwhile, contributes a particular brightness and innocence, but its function is more sophisticated than simple decoration. Together, guitar and glockenspiel create a timbral world which is unmistakably appropriate to the work's dedicatee without becoming musically childish.

The opening is beautifully judged. The guitar and *pizzicato* lower strings establish a quiet pulse beneath the first melodic appearances of the winds. The effect is intimate. It is almost possible to imagine the music beginning in a family setting rather than on a concert platform.

That intimacy is maintained even when the music becomes more elaborate. The tunes are not buried beneath contrapuntal ingenuity. Instead, Bullock surrounds them with changing textures. One melody may appear in the flute, another in the oboe or clarinet, while the strings provide either sustained harmonic support or rhythmic figures. The arrangements therefore give each song its own orchestral personality. This is an important distinction. *Evelyn's Evergreens* is not simply a medley in which one tune follows another. The musical material is recomposed through orchestral colour.

The changes of tempo help to establish this sense of variety. The songs are not being treated merely as vehicles for gaiety. They are capable of being slowed down, harmonically enriched and contemplated.

At rehearsal C, the texture becomes noticeably more spacious. The strings carry much of the expressive burden, while the upper winds temporarily disappear. The result is almost a miniature orchestral nocturne. What had been familiar children's material is suddenly seen from another angle. This is where the work becomes more than a charming family souvenir. It reveals the composer's instinct to take simple material seriously without making it solemn. That distinction runs through much of Bullock's music. Here, however, it is especially clear because the starting material is deliberately uncomplicated. The musical interest must therefore come from the treatment rather than from complexity for its own sake.

The winds become increasingly active, while the strings provide a more substantial rhythmic foundation. By the time the music reaches the later pages, the original simplicity has been transformed into a lively miniature orchestral texture.

One particularly appealing feature is the recurrence of *ostinato*-like rhythmic patterns. These give the arrangements a sense of physical movement while allowing the melodies to remain clear. The guitar is especially effective here, since its repeated chords establish a pulse which feels immediate and familiar rather than formally “composed”.

The strings operate differently. Their writing can become much more elaborate, with rapid repeated notes, triplet figures and sustained lines. The first and second violins often move independently, while the cello and bass provide harmonic and rhythmic grounding. This gives the miniature ensemble a surprising degree of orchestral depth.

The winds, too, are treated as individual characters rather than simply as a homogeneous woodwind choir. Flute, oboe, clarinet and bassoon have different registers and colours, and the score exploits these differences to give successive presentations of the melodies distinct identities.

This is perhaps the central compositional achievement of the work: the songs remain themselves while the musical surroundings continually change. That is precisely what an affectionate arrangement for a child ought to do. Recognition is essential. If the tunes were transformed beyond recognition, the purpose would be lost. But if they were merely copied, there would be little reason for the composer to have written them.

Bullock finds the middle ground. There is also something deeply personal about the fact that the work captures a temporary musical preference. Children's favourites change. What is endlessly fascinating at one age may be forgotten a few years later. By making this arrangement, the composer fixes that fleeting period in musical form. The work therefore functions almost as a musical family photograph in sound. It does not record Evelyn's appearance, or what she said, or where she lived. It records something much more elusive: what she liked to hear. The “evergreens” are evergreen only because they have been preserved. Without the composition, they would remain a memory belonging to one particular period of childhood.

The ending is consequently significant. After the various transformations and changes of instrumental colour, the music gradually comes to rest. The final page does not seek a grand orchestral conclusion; the small ensemble is allowed to finish quietly. A grand finale would actually have been less appropriate. The work's emotional force lies in its scale. It is a grandfather's musical gift, not a public monument. The journey through the orchestral catalogue has taken us through works of ceremony, friendship, philosophy, history, ritual, celebration and abstraction. Here, finally, all the apparatus is reduced to something wonderfully simple: a small orchestra playing the songs a granddaughter loved.

Shaadi - Wedding Op. 339a

Programme Note

Shaadi - Wedding was written for the wedding of a friend in Jaipur, India. The title uses the Hindi word *shaadi*, meaning wedding, and the music was conceived specifically for this celebration. Rather than attempting to reproduce the rituals or sounds of an Indian wedding, the piece responds to the occasion itself: the sense of anticipation, happiness, gathering and emotional significance which surrounds the joining of two lives.

The music opens quietly, with the flute and clarinet presenting a gently shaped melodic idea above delicate harp writing and sustained strings. There is an atmosphere of expectation in these opening bars, as though the celebration has not yet fully begun. The melody is lyrical and unhurried, while the restrained orchestration allows the individual instrumental colours to remain clearly audible.

Gradually the music becomes more animated. Accelerations and relaxations of tempo, together with sudden dynamic changes, give the piece a sense of movement and spontaneity. The material passes between the woodwind, harp and strings, creating an impression of musical conversation. Moments of greater animation are repeatedly balanced by quieter passages, so that celebration and reflection exist side by side.

The Indian setting is therefore present primarily through the occasion and its personal significance rather than through quotation or imitation. The music does not seek to sound traditionally Indian; instead, it reflects the composer's response to being part of a wedding celebration in Jaipur and to the friendship which gave rise to the work.

Towards the conclusion, the music again gathers energy before subsiding into sustained, quiet sonorities. The ending is deliberately gentle. Rather than closing with a conventional ceremonial flourish, it leaves the listener with a sense of continuation: the wedding marks not simply the culmination of something, but the beginning of a new life together. The work was completed in Senheim, Germany, on 29 October 2023.

Discussion

Shaadi - Wedding is a small work with a very specific personal origin. It was written for the wedding of a friend in Jaipur, India, and that circumstance is essential to understanding its character. Unlike a symphonic poem, it does not attempt to translate a landscape, historical episode or narrative into orchestral terms. Nor does it attempt to construct an imagined Indian musical style. Its subject is much simpler and, in a sense, more intimate: the composer's musical response to a particular human occasion.

This distinction is important because the title might otherwise encourage the listener to search for specifically Indian musical references. They are not the principal concern of the piece. The Hindi word *shaadi* identifies the cultural setting, but Bullock responds to that setting through his own musical language. The work therefore becomes an encounter between the personal and the geographical: a piece written in Germany for a wedding taking place in India, carrying within it the memory and emotional significance of that connection.

The opening immediately establishes the intimate scale of the conception. Flute and clarinet offer closely related melodic gestures, while the harp provides a delicate counterpoint and the strings sustain a quiet harmonic background. The orchestra is used with considerable transparency. Rather than presenting the wedding as a grand public spectacle, Bullock begins from a private emotional perspective. The music seems to wait, listen and anticipate.

As the work develops, the repeated alternation between *accelerando* and *ritardando,* between stronger and softer dynamics and between activity and repose, creates a flexible musical pulse. The effect is almost conversational. One instrumental group initiates an idea and another responds; the music gathers momentum, pauses, and begins again. Such writing seems particularly appropriate to the social character of a wedding, where private emotion and communal celebration continually overlap.

The orchestra itself is modest but carefully differentiated. The three horns provide an additional harmonic dimension without turning the work into a grand ceremonial statement, while the harp retains its distinctive role as a source of delicacy and colour. The strings provide warmth and continuity, and the woodwind carry much of the melodic personality. The orchestral palette consequently remains light and transparent even when the dynamics become more forceful.

What makes the work especially attractive is its refusal of cliché. A wedding piece could easily become triumphal, sentimental or excessively ceremonial. *Shaadi* chooses none of these paths. Its happiness is genuine but understated. The quieter passages are as important as the moments of animation, and the music seems conscious that a wedding contains more than celebration alone. It represents transition, commitment, friendship and the opening of a new chapter.

In the context of Bullock's wider orchestral catalogue, *Shaadi - Wedding* therefore occupies a distinctive place. The symphonies and symphonic poems may engage with large historical, geographical and philosophical subjects, but works such as this reveal another dimension of the composer: the capacity to respond directly and affectionately to an individual human event. Its brevity is consequently not a limitation but part of its purpose. It is a musical gift, written for a particular occasion and shaped by the memory of a particular place.

The result is an affectionate and quietly celebratory work in which Jaipur is present not as musical exoticism but as the setting for friendship and marriage. *Shaadi* is, ultimately, a celebration of people rather than of spectacle - and that gives this small orchestral work its particular warmth.

Festival Overture in Blue Op. 372

Programme Note

Festive Overture in Blue was written in Senheim on 27–28 April 2026. It is an unabashedly celebratory orchestral work, conceived for a large orchestra and drawing upon the full range of its resources, from the restless activity of the strings to the weight and brilliance of the brass, the colour of the woodwind and the punctuation of timpani and side drum.

The opening does not begin with an immediate orchestral proclamation. Instead, the music emerges through rapid movement in the strings, whose repeated and accumulating figurations establish a sense of energy before the rest of the orchestra gradually enters. The effect is one of something gathering momentum from within. The first substantial orchestral statements then broaden the musical space, with the woodwind, brass and strings taking up complementary roles.

Throughout the overture, Bullock alternates between passages of vigorous rhythmic activity and broader, more sustained orchestral writing. The rapid string figures are particularly important, frequently providing an underlying current against which longer melodic or harmonic statements can be heard. At other moments the orchestra is reduced to relatively spare textures, allowing individual instrumental groups to emerge before the larger sonority is restored. This continual expansion and contraction gives the work its sense of movement and keeps the festive character from becoming merely bombastic.

The title *In Blue* is reflected not through a programme or narrative but through the work's distinctive harmonic atmosphere. Against the extrovert character of the overture there are passages of considerable harmonic spaciousness, in which sustained brass and wind sonorities are set against the continuing motion of the strings. The music consequently combines the public rhetoric of the overture with a more reflective and spacious harmonic dimension.

As the work progresses, familiar rhythmic ideas return in increasingly emphatic forms. The music repeatedly builds towards stronger orchestral statements, then draws back before beginning another surge of activity. The later pages intensify this process, with the orchestra becoming increasingly massive and the rhythmic figures increasingly insistent.

The final section brings the celebratory purpose of the work unmistakably into the foreground. Sustained orchestral sonorities are interrupted and renewed, while the strings again generate rapid movement beneath the broader orchestral statements. Eventually the full orchestra arrives at a powerful final affirmation. The score then adds two wonderfully informal touches: *“Champagne”* and *“Cork!”*. The music ends, quite literally, with the celebration complete.

Discussion

By the time of Opus 372, Bullock had no need to demonstrate that he could write for a large orchestra, nor to justify the use of the traditional overture as a form. The work simply takes possession of the orchestra and celebrates the possibilities of orchestral sound. Bullock avoids making the work a mere ceremonial fanfare. The music has sufficient harmonic and textural substance to remain interesting beyond the immediate circumstances of its dedication.

The opening is particularly effective in this respect. Rather than beginning with the full orchestra, Bullock allows the strings to establish a rapid, almost feverish current of motion. The opening pages show the upper strings engaged in continuous semiquaver activity, with the lower strings contributing to the same underlying energy. The orchestra is therefore not presented as a static block of sound. It seems to grow organically out of movement.

When the winds and brass enter more fully, the contrast is striking. Sustained and articulated figures are set against the restless string texture, producing the characteristic Bullock combination of movement beneath breadth. The technique is used repeatedly throughout the work. The strings can generate an almost perpetual-motion surface while the wind and brass articulate larger harmonic or melodic shapes above it. The result gives the overture considerable propulsion without requiring a single continuously accelerating narrative.

This is also where the word festive becomes important. Bullock's conception of celebration is not exclusively associated with brilliant brass and percussion. Celebration can also be represented by energy, abundance and the sheer pleasure of instrumental colour. The orchestral forces are generous: flute, oboe, clarinet, bassoon, horn, trumpet, trombones, bass trombone, tuba, timpani, side drum and the complete string section. The orchestra is consequently capable of both delicacy and enormous weight.

The *blue* of the title introduces another dimension. Blue notes infiltrate the textures and become explicit in the trumpet solo. What can be heard is a particular tension between the overture's extrovert purpose and passages in which the harmony becomes relaxed and spacious and the orchestral texture temporarily less emphatic. This alternation is central to the work's form. Bullock does not construct the overture as one uninterrupted crescendo. Instead, he repeatedly builds, releases and rebuilds. The recurring rhythmic figures become structural agents, returning in different instrumental combinations and at different levels of intensity. The listener therefore develops a sense of familiarity even when the surface details are changing.

The later music becomes increasingly monumental. The ending is particularly revealing of the work's personality. The final pages do not merely provide a formal cadence; they turn the musical occasion into a theatrical celebration. After the sustained final orchestral statements, Bullock writes *"Champagne"* and then *"Cork!"* into the score. It is an irresistibly human ending, and it prevents the grandeur of the preceding music from becoming solemn. The composer is clearly enjoying the occasion as much as the orchestra is being asked to celebrate it.

In the context of the non-symphonic music for orchestra, *Festive Overture in Blue* therefore represents a particularly extrovert side of Bullock's orchestral personality. It is neither a symphonic poem nor a symphony in miniature, and it does not need an elaborate programme to justify itself. Its purpose is more immediate: to generate energy, colour, communal feeling and finally sheer enjoyment.

There is, moreover, something rather fitting about its position in the catalogue. After the enormous intellectual and emotional territories explored in the symphonies and symphonic poems, this late work simply celebrates. Its 17 pages are filled with movement, colour, accumulation and release, culminating in the most practical possible conclusion to a festive occasion: champagne, followed by the cork.

That final gesture also captures something essential about the work as a whole. *Festive Overture in Blue* is serious music, but it is not solemn music. It possesses orchestral ambition without self-importance, and craftsmanship without suppressing the pleasure of the occasion. In that respect, it is a very characteristic late Bullock work: generous, energetic, colourful and ultimately rather good-humoured.

Retrospect

Looking back over these works as a group, I am struck less by their differences than by the extent to which they reflect the circumstances from which they emerged. They were not conceived as chapters in a single project. Some were written for people, some for occasions, some in response to particular places or ideas, and some simply because a particular musical possibility presented itself. Their diversity is therefore intrinsic to their character.

There is, nevertheless, a recurring dialogue between the public and the private. The ceremonial world of *Festmusik* and the *Birthday Serenade* requires breadth, presence and a sense of occasion. Brass, percussion and full orchestral sonority naturally create a public musical space. But neither work remains entirely within that world. *Festmusik* moves from the outward ceremony of *Einzug* through the intimacy of its *Interlude* towards *Licht*, while the *Birthday Serenade* allows its ceremonial gestures to coexist with passages of lighter and more personal character.

Festmusik 2 perhaps makes this process most explicit. Its five sections progressively alter the relationship between the individual and the collective. Brass and timpani announce the celebration; flute and cello create an intimate conversation; the string orchestra turns inward; percussion produces an almost ritualistic collective energy; and the full orchestra finally brings these contrasting perspectives together. Celebration here becomes not a single emotional state but a succession of ways of experiencing an occasion.

The opposite movement can be found in *Elegy* and *Chanson Triste*. Both begin from familiar expressive territories—loss, sadness, remembrance—but neither depends upon overt melodrama. In *Elegiy*, restraint becomes the principal means of expression. The title itself, with its unfinished phrase, leaves the object of the elegy deliberately open. *Chanson Triste* similarly transforms sadness into an essentially instrumental song, allowing the orchestra to sustain an emotional state rather than narrate one. Looking back, I see in both pieces an interest in the possibility that emotional intensity can be created through persistence and understatement rather than through dramatic climax.

Abschieds-Walzer occupies an especially interesting position in retrospect. Its farewell is expressed through one of the most sociable and recognisable of musical forms, the waltz, yet the presence of Mahler alongside Strauss in the subtitle immediately complicates the picture. The waltz is simultaneously dance, memory and theatrical gesture. Its returns allow the music to look backwards even as it continues forwards, and the final *"und … Servus!"* permits the farewell to end with affection rather than solemnity. The piece reminds me that humour and seriousness need not be opposites; indeed, they can intensify one another.

Der Doktor – Faust in Wien belongs to another kind of musical theatre, where Goethe's profound intellectual questions coexist with an almost mischievous orchestral personality. The repeated catalogue of Faust's studies becomes both philosophical lament and comic refrain. The orchestra does not merely accompany the tenor but participates in the drama, giving the piece a character somewhere between homage, parody and affectionate theatrical portrait.

The most personal work in the collection is perhaps *Evelyn's Evergreens*. Unlike the ceremonial works, it makes no claim to public importance. Its importance lies precisely in its intimacy. These were songs loved by Evelyn at a particular stage of her childhood, and the act of arranging them preserves something that would otherwise simply disappear with time. The piece is, in that sense, a musical photograph: not a portrait of childhood in general, but a record of one particular child, one particular period and the affection surrounding it.

The small wedding piece belongs to the same broad human tradition. Its significance lies not in scale but in circumstance: music made for friends, for a wedding in Jaipur, music for a very different geographical and social setting which becomes part of a personal celebration.

Seen together, these works suggest that the borders of a catalogue are rather porous. The distinction between a symphony and an occasional work, between a ceremonial composition and a personal tribute, between serious reflection and musical humour, becomes less absolute when one considers the reasons music is actually written. Composition is not always driven by an abstract formal ambition. Sometimes it begins with a person, a place, a friendship, a birthday, a farewell, a ceremony, a memory - or simply a tune that ought to be heard.

That may be the most revealing aspect of these works now that they can be viewed retrospectively. They preserve encounters. Some remember people; some remember occasions; some remember places or traditions; and *Evelyn's Evergreens* preserves a moment of family life. The music therefore becomes a kind of parallel autobiography - not an autobiography told through words, but one in which particular moments have been converted into sound.

Perhaps that is why these works, despite their considerable differences of scale and purpose, belong together. They are records of engagement: with friends, institutions, traditions, texts, ceremonies and family. They show a composer not only constructing musical forms but responding to the world immediately around him. And in that sense they complement the larger orchestral works. If the symphonies and symphonic poems often provide the broadest landscapes, these pieces offer something closer to the human figures inhabiting them.

Looking back, I would not want to separate the "occasional" from the "serious". The occasion was often the reason the music came into existence, but it was never necessarily the limit of what the music could become. These works have outlived their immediate circumstances. What began as celebration, farewell, tribute, friendship, ceremony or family affection has become part of the permanent catalogue - and, with it, part of the musical record of a life.

Dafydd Bullock

Dafydd Bullock was born in 1953 in Llanberis, Gwynedd, Cymru (Wales). A composer, conductor, arranger and teacher, he graduated in Music (University of Manchester and the Royal Northern College of Music, 1971 - 1976) where he studied with George Hadjinikos, and took a Master's Degree in International Relations (University of Sussex, 1981 - 1983). In 1993 and 1994 he won first prizes at the National Eisteddfod of Wales, and in 1995 he was honoured in Wales by admission to the highest Order of the Gorsedd of Bards. He was made a Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts in 2005.

His compositions include 41 Symphonies, 19 Symphonic Poems, 2 Operas, 2 Requiems, 2 Mass settings, a Missa Brevis, an Oratorio, 44 String Quartets, 9 Trios and other chamber music and many songs and pieces for piano. He has written scores for 2 films.

Works have been published in the British Isles by Cwmni Gwynn, Curiad and Bardic Edition, in Belgium by Alain Van Kerckhoven Editeur, in the USA and in Luxembourg by Luxembourg Music Publishers, Music Enterprise and Double You. He has made 42 CDs to date, with SAIN (Wales), AVK (Belgium) and LakeSound. His music has been performed and broadcast in many countries, including Japan, China, Brazil and Colombia as well as widely within Europe.

Dafydd Bullock has a particular relationship with Prague: his Second Symphony was given its world premiere by Musici de Praga during the 1996 Prague Spring Festival and the Third Symphony, again in Prague, on St. Valentine's Day, 1997. The third and fourth String Quartets were also recorded in Prague (Becher Quartet) as were the complete works for Cello and Piano (Jindrich Ptacek) and five Trios. Virtuosi di Basso, the twelve solo celli of the Czech Philharmonic Orchestra have recorded and performed music especially written for them. In 2008 and 2009 he premiered his Requiem for Jan Palach in Luxembourg and in Prague.

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